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RED LIGHTNING;

OR,

THE BLACK LEAGUE.

A TALE OF THE TRADING-POSTS IN 1760.

BY W. J. HAMILTON,

Author of the following Dime Novels:

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(No. 248.)

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RED LIGHTNING.

CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE PROPHET.

A CANOE was floating slowly on the waters of the Detroit river, under the shelter of the strip of land now known as "Fighting Island," containing a single occupant, a young man in the dress of a ranger, one of those wonderful men—half soldier, half hunter, and all scout—who have done so much to make this country famous. The canoe was of birchen bark, and constructed with consummate skill, evidently by an Indian hand. The young man wore a hunting-shirt of tanned buck-skin, soft as beaver, and ornamented with bullion fringe and gilt buttons. A broad black belt was strapped about his waist, and in it hung a pair of pistols and a heavy knife, very much like the bowie now in use, and heavy enough to cleave a man to the waist at a single blow. In the bow of the canoe lay a ponderous rifle, such as the frontiersmen used at that time, and a most deadly weapon in practiced hands.

The man himself was young, as we have said, with a heavy, drooping mustache, a face bronzed by sun and wind, and a bold, determined eye, and to all appearance a person not likely to shrink at the near approach of danger. A handsome fellow, too, and one likely to please the eye of a woman. He did not appear to be in haste, nor to desire to leave the shelter of the island, for the paddle just touched the water lightly from time to time, and that only to keep the canoe in the eddy in which she was drifting, while his keen eyes scanned the shores from end to end, in expectation of some one's approach.

"I wish the Delaware would come," he murmured. "He is not the man to dally when duty calls him, and I want to get back to Detroit."

At this moment the cry of a catbird, repeated three times, sounded from the shore, and the young scout dropped the paddle into the water with vigorous force, sending the head of the canoe whirling about until it lay nearly at right-angles with the current. Then bending his muscular arms to the effort, he sent the light craft spinning across the stream, and landed upon a white strip of sand, under the overhanging bank, where he drew the canoe up out of the water, and gave a low whistle. A moment after, a tufted head was cautiously protruded over the bank above, and a pair of keen eyes looked down upon him.

"Come down, Ketadin," said the scout, impatiently. "I have been waiting for you."

The man above parted the bushes, and with an agile spring, landed upon the sand. He was a tall young Indian of the Delaware nation, with an open, ingenuous face and a straight, sinewy form, a model of forest strength. His dress was of light calico, belted at the waist to hold his tomahawk and knife, and in his hand he carried a rifle similar to the one in the bow of the canoe. The two men clasped hands, and it was plain that a real affection existed between them, the affection which springs up in the hearts of brave men, who have shared danger together.

"Ketadin, my brother," said the white man, "my heart is very glad to meet you again."

"And the Delaware is happy when he can take his brother, the Trailer, by the hand," replied the Indian. Both spoke in the language of the Delawares, for the chief could not manage the English language very well, and the Trailer knew the language of every Indian tribe from the Hudson to Michilimackinac.

"My brother has been long upon the trail," said the Trailer, looking at the dusty moccasins of his red friend. "Has he any thing to sing in the ears of his white brother?"

"He has not been asleep," replied the Indian, gravely, "for the Wyandot and the Ottawa are on the trail, and they do not love the Delaware."

"I reckon if any of them fell foul of you they got rubbed out," said the Trailer, with a low laugh. "Have you taken scalps?"

"Two," was the sententious reply. "An Ottawa and Wyandot slept by a fire in the forest, and one of them had a scalp in his belt which had long hair, soft as silk. It was taken from the head of a woman. A Delaware who is a man does not take the scalp from any but a warrior killed in open battle. I sounded my war-cry and they rose and fought."

"And went under, I'll go bail."

"Their scalps are in my bosom," replied the Indian, quietly.

"Were the rascals painted for war?"

"Yes."

The young scout looked troubled.

"I don't like this," he said. "The French are not idle, and in my opinion we shall have lively times along this river if we are not very careful. The Indians are treacherous, and there is no telling what moment they may rise."

"Let the red-coats in the fort keep both eyes open," said the Indian, "and let them beware of the great Pontiac, for he is a warrior who loves his country, and would have it all for the Indians."

"Red Lightning is in the Indian country," said the Trailer, still in deep thought. "I know it, for a Wyandot told me so a few days ago. What is he doing there?"

"The French have not forgotten," replied the Indian. "Listen. Seven suns ago I was on the trail toward Michilimackinac, and saw red warriors coming from every road, all going toward one point. Upon the road I passed the Little Prophet of the Ottawas going the same way."

"Little Prophet!"

"Ugh."

"Then by Heaven the danger is closer than we thought. When the Little Prophet is sent out to gather the tribes, we may know that a rising is near at hand. And yet, Pontiac preaches patience, and says that the tribes will not lift the hatchet against us."

At this moment a sound scarcely distinguishable above the ordinary sounds of the forest, could be heard by the keen ears of the Indian, and he lifted his hand to enforce silence upon his companion, who was already upon the alert. Both were too well trained in forest wiles not to notice the slightest de-

violation from the usual sounds to be heard, and yet the noise was nothing more than the snapping of a dry twig. Ketadin turned, and with a single agile leap, bounded up the bank, and a short, sharp struggle, accompanied by shrill cries of rage in a singularly weak and piping voice, was audible to the young man below. A moment after the young Indian came bounding back, holding in his arms what appeared to be an Indian boy, but, as his face turned toward the Trailer, it was that of a man of middle age, a shrunken, weazen-faced man, whose height did not exceed three feet. Ketadin plumped the little imp down upon the sand, and stood looking contemptuously upon him, while the manikin leaped to his feet, dancing up and down the sod in a fury, uttering wild, eldritch screams of anger, and beating the air with his clenched fists.

"Little Prophet, by Jove," cried the Trailer. "Now, you little hop-o'-my-thumb, tell me what you are doing here."

The dwarf only answered by a malignant glance, and continued to dance wildly up and down the sand. The Trailer drew a pistol and pointed it at his head, when he instantly doubled up like a ball, and fell upon the sand, without moving a muscle.

"What was the little thief doing up there, Delaware?" demanded the Trailer, turning to the chief.

"He lay with his ear close to the ground listening to our words."

"The cursed spy!" cried the Trailer. "Get up, unless you want me to put a ball through your shriveled carcass. Get up, I say."

The dwarf obeyed, and stood before the white man with his arms folded upon his breast, his eyes cast down, and an air of deep humiliation about him.

"Now, speak up," said the Trailer, "or I'll drop you into my pocket and button it up on you. What were you doing up there?"

"Sleep," piped the ridiculous specimen of humanity in his shrill voice. "Sleep much."

"You lie, Little Prophet. Who ever knew you to sleep upon a trail?"

"Very tire; much tire," was the answer, delivered in execrable English. "Walk much."

"I reckon I'll have to lick you, my sweet youth. Come here to me."

He caught the dwarf by the collar with both hands, lifted him from the ground, and shook him until his teeth fairly rattled in his head, while the little scoundrel kept uttering piercing cries, more of rage than fear.

"Blood, blood, blood," he hissed. "I smell blood in the air."

"You'll smell blood in your nose in about half a second, you little thief. Come; what were you doing up there?"

"Sleep," persisted the Little Prophet. "Sleep too much."

"Who sent you to follow the Delaware?"

"Come myself; go to Detroit and see white friend. Jus' come," replied Little Prophet, in such evident sorrow that it was plain he spoke the truth.

"Then get out of this. Let me see you again anywhere near Detroit and I'll tie you neck and heels and pitch you into the river."

The hint was enough. The dwarf, bounding up the low bank, quickly disappeared in the depths of the surrounding woods.

"That little rascal ought to be killed," said the Trailer, "but I can't find it in my heart to do it, because it looks so much like hunting a child."

"Little Prophet very bad man," said the Delaware. "Ought to take his scalp."

"Let him go; he can't do us any harm. Push out the canoe."

They took their places, and under their united strokes the canoe glided upward swiftly, between the low, green banks.

CHAPTER II.

DETROIT. ROSE ST. AUBIN.

THIS frontier settlement, about which the events here set down occurred, was founded in 1701 by a Frenchman, Le Motte Cardillac by name. From its first inception, it seemed fitted by natural advantages to become a place of note, and in a few years a flourishing settlement of twenty-five hundred souls sprung up about the fort which Cardillac had built. The French are an improvident people, but lovers of beauty, and their neat houses were surrounded by thriving orchards and inclosed by white palings. The fort, or more properly fortified portion of the town, stood upon the western bank of the river, upon the site of the present city of Detroit. It consisted of about one hundred houses, built closely together, and surrounded by a palisade.

Theirs was a happy, careless life at Detroit. The habitually improvident Canadians were made more so by the ease with which they subsisted. The forest was full of game of every sort, the river swarmed with fish, and myriads of wild fowl occupied the marshy land. Even the long winters were a source of social enjoyment, for then the voyageur, hunter and trader came to Detroit, and passed the days in dancing, carousal and merry meetings.

The French had always lived at peace with the Indians, although parts of three different tribes were within the limits of the settlement. On the western shore, a short distance south of the fort, the Pottawatomies were camped. On the eastern side, nearly opposite this tribe, the Wyandots' village was located; while, five miles up the stream Pontiac and his Ottawas had their place of abode. These three tribes and the French, from the conciliatory policy of the former, had never quarreled, and until the advent of the English had never dreamed of trouble. But Rodgers and his Rangers came and the fort fell, and Pontiac agreed to live in peace with the English if they would treat him with the respect due a great

chief. But, for some time, an evil thought had been rankling in the bosom of the chief. He saw that, by a bold stroke, the small force of the English could be cut off at Detroit and its sister posts, and he was contriving a plan to destroy them. Yet this man stalked among the whites, when he chose, cloaking his dreadful purpose under the mask of Indian stoicism, which he knew well how to assume.

Major Gladwyn commanded the force at this post. He had about one hundred and twenty regulars, who had fought Indians before, and a still more efficient force in this kind of fighting, a number of half-breeds and scouts, devoted to his service, and up to all the tricks and devices of the Indians. Among the most trusted in this band of scouts, and the most esteemed by the major, was Edward Gresham, familiarly known as "the Trailer," from his scouting propensities, and who held a sort of command over the force of bordermen.

This explanation will suffice.

The Trailer and Ketadin reached the fort, and the white man was at once closeted with the major, to whom he made his report. This done, he emerged from the fort, and went out into the scattered portion of the settlement, while the Delaware remained within the palisade.

Just on the outskirts of the settlement was a neatly-built cottage, standing in the midst of a thick growth of thriving fruit trees, and bowered in by vines as only a Frenchman knows how to grow them. A neat fence surrounded the cottage, and, swinging open the gate, Gresham walked rapidly up the walk and rapped at the door. A light step was heard inside, the latch was lifted and a beautiful girl stood upon the threshold. She was not tall, rather of a *petite* figure, but beautifully formed, and graceful as a fawn. Her hair was of a rich golden brown, and gleamed like gold where the sunlight fell upon it. Her mouth seemed made for kisses, smiling, sweet. She was the fairest flower that bloomed in that frontier post, the toast of all, from the major in command of the post to the voyageur; Rose St. Aubin, poetically named "Bright Star" by the Indians.

"Edward?" she cried, "I am glad you have come."

He made no audible answer, but drew her close to him, and pressed his lips to hers. Do not start, dear reader, they were

betrothed, and every one said it was a love-match. But, half hidden by the vines which shaded the garden walk, a man crouched who saw the meeting, and who gnawed his lips until the blood started, and twice laid his hand upon a weapon, and as often withdrew it. There was one at least who did not wish to see Rose St. Aubin married to the bold scout. This man, crouching among the leaves, saw the tender greeting, and, as the door closed upon them, rose from his half-reclumbent position, shaking his clenched fist at the house.

"Go your ways, you two," he muttered, "but a cloud hangs over this village which will one day burst and overwhelm it. I say it, I, and these lips never lie where vengeance is to be appeased. Rose St. Aubin, fair but false, a danger hangs over you and your wild lover which no power can avert."

He drew back, and stealing softly away through the orchard, leaped the paling and reached the river-side, where a canoe lay upon the bank. Pushing it into the water, he took up the paddle, and bending his strength to the work, shot rapidly up the stream toward the north.

Rose St. Aubin, still holding her lover's hand, led him into the little parlor, tastefully furnished, and adorned with many little articles of woman's workmanship, which go so far to beautify a home like this. The windows were open, and a pleasant fragrance from the honeysuckle and grape-vines filled the room. They sat down upon a low settle covered with chintz, and Gresham looked tenderly into the fair face beaming with love for him.

"My darling," he said, soft'y, "how have you been, in the weeks we have been parted?"

"Well, Edward; as happy as I can be when you are away, and in danger."

"The life of a borderman is fraught with danger always," replied the young man. "I must take my chances with the rest, of course. Where is your father?"

"He has gone to the Wyandot village to trade with the natives."

"Ah; when he comes back I must see him, as I have something of importance to tell him. Ha! what is that?"

A sharp, whizzing sound was heard, and an arrow passed

between the pair, and remained quivering in the wall, within a foot of Gresham's head. So closely had it passed, indeed, that he felt the feather brush against his hair, and he knew that some enemy had sought his life. Springing to his feet, the young scout ran to the window, dashed aside the interposing vines, which alone had saved his life, and the next moment was in the garden, a pistol in his hand, looking fiercely about him for an enemy. Rose called to him to return, but, unheeding her voice, he darted into the orchard, and searched everywhere for the Indian he believed to lie concealed there. He searched in vain, for, although he explored every nook and cranny, no one could be found, and with a moody and lowering brow, he returned to the house.

"What is it?" whispered Rose. "Whose life do they seek, yours or mine?"

"Mine," replied the Trailer, "but I will be too much for them in the end."

"Whom do you suspect?"

"I am not loved too much by the ultra men in either of the tribes, for I know them too well."

"Have you given any of them particular cause to hate you?"

"Yes; the Little Prophet of the Ottawas. By heaven, it can be no other."

"Look here," cried Rose, pulling the arrow from the wall. "What is this paper?"

Wrapped about the shaft of the arrow was a narrow strip of paper, which Rose took off, and read with dilated eyes.

"*To Edward Gresham, known as 'the Trailer':*

"The knell of your doom is tolling. If you would save your life, put as many miles as you can between yourself and Detroit, this very day. Every hour you pass here is another nail in your coffin. Heed the warning from the Great Brotherhood.

"C OF V."

"This is melodramatic," said Gresham, laughing. "Give me that paper, Rose, as it may serve at some time to identify this man, who may then look out for me. Leave Detroit? Not I!"

"Yet this warning is given in earnest, Edward," said Rose.

"Would you have me leave you and run away like a coward,

because I have received an anonymous letter? But, I am not so easily disposed of, as this fellow shall find, if he ever has occasion to measure strength with me. His impudence is amazing, and ought to meet its reward."

"I fear you are in great danger, Edward," replied the girl.

"Not more than I must expect. I have made myself enemies, it is true, but chiefly for the reason that I am faithful to the interests of my own countrymen. We are of different nations, and I do not like to speak of it, but there are bad men among your people who would take delight in stirring up the Indians to deeds of blood and strife. Pontiac, the head and front of the Indian tribes, a man of more ability than many a leader on our side, is working in the dark for one great object, the destruction of the advanced English post. But he shall fail, if I have a brain or an arm."

At this moment came a rap at the door, and Rose went out, leaving the parlor door wide open. As the front door swung back, Gresham saw a man standing outside whom he knew at once—Pontiac, the terrible chief of the Ottawas—a man of herculean build, with a haughty air which might have become a king. His long black hair, uncut, swept down upon his shoulders, and his cold, clear-cut, determined face bespoke the man of nerve and power. He wore a gaudily trimmed hunting-shirt of white buck-skin, covered with wampum ornaments, and from his neck, suspended by a golden chain, hung a great medal presented to him by the French king. A blanket, lined with red cloth, hung in graceful folds from his shoulders, and about his waist was wrapped the broad wampum belt denoting the great chief of the Confederate tribes. He wore a feather head-dress, with drooping heron plumes, which waved in the summer breeze. His lower limbs were clothed in leggings, and upon his moccasins were worked the totem of his tribe.

"The Bright Star knows the face of a great chief," said the Indian, in a mellow, persuasive voice, speaking the French language with ease and fluency. "Is he welcome to the lodge of her father?"

"He is welcome," said Rose, extending her hand to the chief. "Enter."

Pontiac followed her with a steady tread, and although

evidently disconcerted at the presence of the Trailer, he made no outward sign of disappointment, but seated himself in the place pointed out by the girl.

"Where is St. Aubin, the good trader, the man who is loved by the Indians?" demanded the chief.

"He is at the Wyandot village."

"It is well; Pontiac would have been glad to take him by the hand," said the chief, "when he returns, let the Bright Star shine upon his heart and make it warm. Say to him that Pontiac, chief of the Ottawas, and sachem of the tribes, would see him at his village. Sing in his ears that the lodge of Pontiac, is always open to just men, and there is a warm place and food for him there."

"I will tell him."

Pontiac now turned to Gresham with a kindling eye, and he now spoke in the Indian tongue.

"White man," he said, "when you have come to the Ottawa lodges, have they treated you well?"

"Yes," replied Gresham, with a puzzled look.

"Then why have you disgraced a man who is loved among the Ottawas?"

"Whom do you mean?"

"Let not Gresham speak with a double tongue," replied Pontiac, in a severe tone. "The Little Prophet has returned to the village, to tell how he has been wronged by Gresham and Ketadin."

"I have done no more than you would have done," replied Gresham. "Will Pontiac listen to my words?"

"The ears of the chief are open."

"The Little Prophet came crawling like a snake to listen to the words of myself and Ketadin. We caught him, but no harm was done him by either of us."

"Did you not lay your hands upon him, the man whose office is sacred among the Indian tribes?"

"Of course I did, and I would do the same thing if he repeated his spying. Look, chief of the Ottawas. If your tribe were in council, and a spy crawled in to listen to your words, what would you do?"

"The Little One is a prophet," said Pontiac doubtfully, wishing to appear just.

"We did not think of that, and beyond handling him a little roughly, perhaps, no harm was done him, in the least."

Pontiac rose as if to depart without adding another word, and Rose accompanied him to the door. Then he stopped and spoke in a low tone.

"Send the Trailer away. In an hour I will return, and tell you something because I love the good trailer."

Rose made no answer, so surprised was she at what he said, and before she had recovered herself sufficiently to answer, the chief had opened the garden gate, and was walking swiftly toward the fortress. There was something very suspicious to Edward in this visit, and he cut his call short, promising to come back in the evening, if possible; then he hurried down to the fort, where he found Ketadin, anxiously awaiting him.

"Have you seen the Little Prophet?" he said quickly.

"He is here, with Pontiac, and they have gone to the lodge of the major," replied Ketadin.

"Why are they here?"

"They have come to sing in the ear of Gladwyn against us, because we put our hands upon the Little Prophet."

"I hope they may make something out of the major by complaining of me," said Edward. "Come to my house, where we can talk without being spied upon."

Gresham had a small house within the fort, and here he lived when in the settlement, with no other companion save a French voyageur, whom he kept in the capacity of cook and general factotum. He was standing in the doorway when they came up, a shriveled but jovial-looking man of middle age, with all the suavity and grace of his nation.

"Mossu Edward, I s'all greet you avec plaisir. Wat you s'all please to ordaire for ze dinner?"

"Any thing, Pierre; any thing. I am not particular, and you know how to cook."

"Certainement; I t'ink I s'all set before une ver' fine venison saddle, but ze dam dog of ze garrison 'ave carry it away av it *notage*, by gar. I s'all exterminate ze dog from ze face of ze e'rt'."

"Give us any thing you have, as we are hungry enough to take any thing."

"Zere s'all be une small billet doux come for Mossu Edward."

"A letter? Let me have it."

Pierre led the way into the house, and with many bows and flourishes presented a letter, with the name of Edward Gresham upon the back. He tore it open hastily, and found it the exact counterpart of the one he had found upon the arrow.

"This grows interesting," he muttered. "Some one is taking an unusual interest in my welfare, it would seem, and it behoves me to find out who the person is. Who left this letter, Pierre?"

"Von small Indian boy; ver' small."

"What tribe?"

"Mossu, I s'all not be able to tell you. He coom quickly, drop ze letter, and go away. I attend to my soup, and not notice him nooch."

"I wish you had looked at him more closely. If another letter comes, be sure that you can describe the person."

"He s'all tell you in ze letter."

"Umph; not exactly. You can go, Pierre."

The Frenchman bowed himself out with many genuflections and grimaces. Edward took out the arrow which had carried the first letter.

"What tribe is this from, Ketadin," he said. "You understand arrows better than I do."

"Ottawa!" replied the Delaware, without the slightest hesitation.

CHAPTER III.

THE OUTLAW'S WOOING.

NIGHT came down upon the sleeping fort, and no one was in the streets, save the sentries as they paced their lonely rounds, for Major Gladwyn kept good discipline among his troops and was always on the alert for treachery. He had good cause, for in all the annals of border war, perhaps no

post was ever situated in a more perilous position than the post at Detroit, literally surrounded by enemies as it was. At midnight, when all were sleeping except the guards, two figures crept silently along in the shadow, and approached the house of Edward Gresham, and disappeared in the small area at the rear. Fifteen minutes after there rose upon the clear air of night one long, loud, terrible scream, the cry of a strong man in agony; and frightened citizens sprung up and ran to Gresham's house. They found a terrible scene of confusion there, an Indian lying dead upon the floor, Edward Gresham, half dressed, with a bare sword in his hand pacing the room excitedly, and Ketadin standing near the wall endeavoring to stanch the blood which flowed from a deep wound in his right arm.

"What is the matter here?" demanded the foremost of the citizens.

"Come and see," replied Gresham, leading the way. "Murder has been done."

Murder! The frightened citizens took up the cry and passed it from man to man, whispered it with white lips, and murmured it in hushed tones. Murder, foul murder! For there, in the room which was usually occupied by Edward, lying in a heap upon the bed, pierced through and through by dreadful wounds, lay the mortal remains of poor Pierre Guilbert, dead, but yet warm. There were marks of bloody hands upon the sheets and bed-clothing, and the drapery was torn and scattered, for the man had fought for his life. How had this murder been done? A window in the rear of the house had been forced open, and through that the assassins had entered to their bloody work.

Edward had been awakened by the first cry of the wounded man, as he lay upon the floor beside the fire. He had not wished to sleep, as he had planned an adventure that night, and had told Pierre to lie down upon his bed, to be prepared to assist them when they were ready to go out. But, being wearied by the long travel of the past few days, he fell asleep, and was only awakened by the death-cry of Guilbert. The two scouts had lain down with their arms beside them, and started up armed in time to see that there were four men in the room with Pierre, and to assist them.

Ketadin, after a desperate struggle, had killed one of the assassins, and received a deep wound from his knife, another was shot by Edward, while the remaining villains took flight through the open window, and managed to escape.

"What is this?" cried one of the citizens, picking up something which lay beside the bed. "Look, if the villains did not cut off one of the poor fellow's fingers in the struggle."

"No, no!" cried Edward. "This is a clue indeed. Look at Pierre and you will see that his hands are not wounded."

He seized the hideous trophy, and taking a small bottle from the mantle, filled it with spirits from a flask, and put the finger in it. There was a ring upon it, and this he took off and put upon his own finger. It was a diamond of rare beauty, with a circle of rubies surrounding the central stone.

Edward did not go out upon the expedition he had purposed, but remained to see his faithful servitor laid in the earth. The burial took place on the next day, while the carcasses of the slain Indians, one of whom was a man unknown to any one in the fort, were exposed upon a gibbet that day and left there at night. Next morning, when they came to look for the bodies, they were gone. Doubtless the friends of the slain Indians had come by night, and stolen them, for the marks of moccasined feet were plainly to be seen in the soft earth about the gibbet.

Pontiac had kept his word with Rose St. Aubin, and at the appointed time she saw his stately form stalking up the walk toward the house. The face of the great chief took on a pleasant smile as he looked down upon the beautiful girl, holding her hand in his.

"A great chief keeps his word," he said. "Pontiac promised to come, and he is here. Has the good trader returned from the Wyandot village?"

"He has not."

"Then Pontiac must sing in the ears of the Star of Detroit alone. Are her ears open to hear his words?"

"I am always ready to listen to the words of the great chief of the Ottawas," replied Rose, who had taken her father's policy of conciliation toward the Indians. "Let Pontiac speak."

"Can the Star of Detroit be secret when a chief speaks? Will she promise not to sing my words in the ears of the chiefs of the Yengees?"

"I may tell it to my father?"

"Yes."

"Then I promise not to tell it to Major Gladwyn or any of the white officers."

"This is well done. Listen: when the Bright Star sees a dark cloud in the sky, and knows that a storm is about to break over her head, what does she do?"

"She flies to the safety of her dwelling," answered Rose, adopting the figurative language of the Indian.

"Good. The Bright Star shines quickly, and her ears take in the words of a great chief. Such a cloud gathers above Detroit, but it does not hang over the heads of the French, who have been the good friends of the red-men. Let the Bright Star keep in the shelter of the wigwam for seven days, and then she may come forth, and shine through the cloud."

"What do you mean, chief?"

"It is not good that you should know more. Pontiac has done wrong to tell so much, but he would save the daughter of the good trader from danger."

"Does this cloud threaten my father?"

"No; the good trader is the friend of the red man."

"Does it threaten Edward Gresham?"

"The Trailer has a long tongue, and has made himself enemies. Let him hide himself for seven days, and come no more to Detroit."

"Chief, was it you who sent the arrow to warn Gresham to go away?"

"I sent no arrow to him," replied Pontiac. "An Ottawa would only send the war-arrow to him, and send it to his heart. Let him flee away from the vengeance of the great tribe."

"May I tell him this?"

"You may warn him, but do not tell him that the warning came from Pontiac, chief of the Ottawas. Remember that you have given your word, and tell no one save the good trader, your father."

The chief turned and walked away by the river-side, toward the Ottawa village. Rose remained alone, waiting for the return of her father, or the coming of Gresham, but neither came. She was deeply moved by the warning of the chief, for she knew that he would not have come to her if the danger had not been imminent. About nine o'clock a rap at the door startled her, and she rose and hurried to the door, thinking that Gresham had come; but she was surprised to see a stranger standing upon the step, whose brows were shaded by a heavy hat concealing the upper part of his face.

"Excuse me, mademoiselle," he said, speaking excellent French, "but may I ask if this is the house of Gilbert St. Aubin, the Indian trader?"

"It is."

"Is he expected to return soon?"

"I expect him every moment."

"Then, with your permission, I will enter and wait for him."

"You are welcome, sir. Step in at once, and I hope my father may return soon."

The man entered, and she closed the front door, and preceded him into the little parlor, where the stranger removed his hat and turned his face toward her, and she started back with a cry of surprise.

"You here! How dare you?"

"I could not resist the temptation, *ma belle*," replied the other, gayly, but with a lurking malice in his eyes. "I was informed that your father was not at home, and took the opportunity to pay my respects."

"What if I were to go to Major Gladwyn and tell him that you are here? You know that you are outlawed, and that a word from me would seal your doom."

"Yet you will not speak that word, *ma chere* Rose," he answered.

"Why should I not?"

"You have not the heart to do it, in the first place. Remember that I have come out of love of you, and nothing else. I have loved you long and tenderly, and you have cast me off for a stranger. I saw you to day, standing upon yon-

der steps, with his hand clasping yours, and his lips pressed to yours. Oh, in that moment I could have killed him where he stood, but I held my hand."

"You dare not meet him face to face."

"Dare not! Even now I hold his life in my hand, and the lifting of a finger could save him, and unless you promise to give him up, and turn to me, who have the best right to your love, he is no better than a dead man."

"You would not murder him?"

"I do not say that, but that he is in imminent danger, from which you only can save him. Rose, this man is not of your nation, but of the cold blood of the colonies of England. He can not love you as I do. He does not know what love means, comparing his tame affection with the fiery passion of the children of the South. I am ready to do any thing, to dare any thing, for your sake, and will even spare his life at your petition."

"False! You do not love me, as you say, or you would not try my heart as you try it now. And when you traduce Edward Gresham, and say that he does not love me, you know that you speak falsely."

"It offends me to the soul that a clod-hopping rascal, a nameless hunter, should dare to rival one with the best blood of France in his veins. You loved me once."

"I was a foolish girl, and was dazzled by the glitter of tinsel and a prospective title. But, that time is past, and good or bad blood is as nothing to me."

"Nothing stands between me and that title save a paralytic old man, who may die any day. Think what you would gain then as my wife, for there is nothing I might not claim if I gained the title to which I am heir. A place in the French court, a rich estate in the provinces, wealth beyond computation, and all laid at your feet."

"You can not tempt me. Go your way, and never speak again of this, for it is hopeless."

"You scorn my love, then?"

"Not that; I can not be false to the love I bear to Edward Gresham."

"You gave the same love to me once, before this accursed scout came."

"It is true, as you say. But when you committed the crime for which you were outlawed, you had no longer any claim upon me. Such villainy would have dissolved any tie."

"A man insulted me, and I stabbed him to the heart."

"Again a falsehood. You insulted the wife of an honest man, and the husband struck you in the face with his open hand. For which act you waylaid him with your braves by night, in the deep forest, and killed him, basely, treacherously. For that act you were outlawed, and for that act I tore your image out of my heart, never to replace it."

"This is your reading of my act, is it?" he hissed. "I tell you it was a false tongue which says that I insulted the wife of that base-born hound, and he deserved his fate."

"And that poor woman, whose husband you so treacherously slew, now roams the forest, weaving chaplets of wild-flowers, seeking for the murdered husband she loved so well. Oh! it would touch a heart of stone to meet her, and hear her plead so plaintively that some one will tell her where he is."

"Is she mad?" murmured the outlaw, in a hushed voice. "It can not be."

"She is mad, vile man, and your wicked act has made her so. Beware of her, for when we speak of you her eyes begin to gleam, and she takes out the dagger she always keeps, the blade with which he was slain, and looks upon the steel, and murmurs something below her breath. Perhaps it is a vow of vengeance; who can tell?"

"Silence; how dare you speak of that to me? These walls have ears, and a breath of my name would bring these low-born hounds upon me, eager for my blood. Death of my life! It has come to a pretty pass when a man can not kill such a creature as that, without all this ado about it."

"You have a wicked heart, man, whose name I will not speak—a cruel, cruel heart. Leave me, for I can not breathe the air you pollute, and so surely as I live, if you dare to come to Detroit again, I will give you up to justice."

"You will?"

"Yes. Hear me—"

"Do not swear, for you know not what you do. It will

not save your lover if I am destroyed, for there are those under my orders who would only strike the harder if I were taken. You must reconsider your decision, for your lover's life hangs upon it, and not only his, but the lives of many others."

"What do you mean?"

"The fate of Detroit trembles in the balance. A spark threatens it which a single breath of mine can blow into a flame. Outlaw though I am, yet I am not so powerless as you think."

"Twice in one day I have been warned. Have you leagued with Pontiac to destroy this settlement?"

"Pontiac? Who said any thing of Pontiac, or any other Indian?"

"No matter; are you base enough to join with savages against white men? I thought you vile, but this would be the crowning crime of all."

"You are too sharp, *ma belle*," said the stranger, sullenly. "We will say no more about that, if you please, but return to the other subject. I tell you that I have sworn an oath that you shall be my wife, and by all the holy saints, I will keep my oath. When your base lover's body is brought to you, dead, then in that hour remember me, and my revenge."

"Wretch!"

"Another thing: keep this interview a secret from all, even from your father. If it becomes known, it can only hasten the denouement. On every side you are watched, night and day. Every movement on your part, and on that of the Trailer, is reported to me each day, and when I choose to take my revenge, it is mine. Ha! who is that?"

"My father has returned. Now, villain, you are in my power."

"Not yet; hide me, or show me the way out of the house at the back."

A loud rapping at the door was heard, and the voice of a man calling the name of Rose.

"I will not aid you."

"Very good; then open the door, and admit him, and I will shoot him as I would a dog."

"Rose, Rose!" cried the voice at the door. "Wake up, my girl. It is I, your father. Open the door quick, for I am weary."

"You will not keep your word," murmured Rose. "You surely do not mean it."

The only reply made by the desperate outlaw was to remove a pistol from the back belt which encircled his waist, shake up the powder in the pan, and lay the barrel of the weapon in the hollow of his hand.

"I will show you the way out," said Rose, quickly. "This way."

The man followed her without a word as she ran swiftly down the hall, opened a door at the back, and passed quickly through the kitchen, when she pointed to the back door, and stopped.

"You promise not to betray me?" he said, pausing with his hand upon the lock.

"Yes, yes; go."

"Not even to mention my name?"

"Not even that, if you will go at once, before my father gets impatient."

"Not to this Edward Gresham, most of all?"

"No, I give my word—"

"Enough; you will keep your word, I am sure. And now good by for the present, but we meet again."

He swung open the door of the kitchen, and was about to pass out, when a hasty step was heard outside, and Gabriel St. Aubin and the outlaw, without warning, stood face to face!

CHAPTER IV.

WILD MADNESS.

EDWARD GRESHAM and Ketamin, when the body of poor Pierre Guilbert was laid in the earth, took their departure from the fort, but not together. The Indian went first, and proceeded down the river, and half an hour after, Edward

went out, armed for the hunt, and proceeded up the stream. Taking such widely divergent paths, it would not seem that they were likely to meet, but an hour later they were seated together upon a grassy knoll, three or four miles to the southwest of the Ottawa village.

"Do you think any one noticed your departure, chief?" said the Trailer.

"Don't know. Go out a good deal; maybe not think."

"Did you see any thing of the Little Prophet?"

"No; gone to Ottawa with Pontiac, and no come back."

"I'll lace that little rascal's hide with a hickory, the first time I meet him. I believe the little thief set those men on us last night, who killed poor Pierre."

"Not after Frenchmen; after *you*."

"I shouldn't wonder. It was the merest chance in the world that I did not sleep there myself."

"That was an Ottawa who fell by my hatchet, but I do not know him. Wagh! why did he raise his hand against Ketadin?"

"You taught him better than that, old boy. How is your wound?"

"It is nothing. A pin digs deeper than an Ottawa hatchet, and he was a fool, and died the death of a fool."

"Hark! what is that?"

The Indian inclined his ear to listen. They heard a clear, sweet, mournful voice, full of wonderful pathos, singing the words of a sad song, evidently an impromptu. It told a touching story of woman's love and faith, of a murdered husband, and an unhappy quest for the loved and lost.

"Will Madge," whispered Edward. "Poor girl! what can she be doing here?"

A footstep stirred the forest leaves, and, directly after, a strange being appeared. She was still young, and had been beautiful, but her beauty was faded, and her tattered garb, disheveled hair, and wandering eye told that the poor brain had given way beneath her sorrows. Her clothing was torn by bush and bramble, and tangled with burrs, and her white feet showed through her worn moccasins. A gay scarf was wound about her tangled locks like a turban, under which her eyes gleamed brightly, but with a restless, changing light.

In one hand she held a stout staff, with which to assist her footsteps over the perilous way, and in the belt at her waist hung a leathern sheath, which held a dagger with a handle of tarnished silver. She did not seem to fear the two men, but set up a silvery laugh as she came toward them.

"Gresham, upon my life! I am so glad to meet you, Edward. Have you seen my Willie anywhere?"

"No," replied Edward, sorrowfully, but with the evident intention of soothing her. "Is he hunting?"

"I don't know," she said. "I lost him yesterday—was it yesterday?—and I have been looking for him. Willie is a good hunter. Sare nothing has harmed him."

"No, no, my poor girl," said Edward, softly. "Willie is safe where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

"The wicked? Ah!" The poor pale hand stole to the hilt of the dagger, drew it out and looked intently upon the blade, and the dark spots which were plainly to be seen about the hilt. Her lips moved, and she seemed to mutter something to herself, though what it was they could not make out.

"Sit down and rest, Midge," said Edward, kindly. "You must be very tired."

"Tired?" she said, wildly. "What right have I to be tired until I have found Willie? Every thing mocks me; I am very tired, very, very tired, and so hungry."

He made her sit down upon the mossy knoll and gave her the cold meat he had brought for himself, and Ketidin added some parched corn from the pouch at his side, and brought a flask of pure, clear water from the stream close at hand, which she drank eagerly, and he went to fill it again. She ate ravenously, like one who had long hungered, and Edward sat by her and helped her to food until she was satisfied.

"That is good," she said. "I am strong again, and can go out and look for Willie. He will not be long in coming back, think?"

"I hope not," said Edward with a great effort at cheerfulness, though he knew that her murdered husband had slept under the green grass by the river-side for two long years.

"We were very happy in our little home," she said, softly,—"very, very happy. We were poor, but this new land easily gave us all we needed, and I did not pine for the country I had left, though sometimes when I fell asleep I would dream of the hawthorn hedges in old Kent, where he first knew and loved me. My poor Willie! Oh, who will find him and bring him back to me?"

"A curse upon Gaston Delisle," muttered Edward. "Oh, that I had him on this green sward, face to face, and I would give his body to the crows, and send his soul, black with many crimes, into the presence of outraged heaven."

"Gaston Delisle!" whispered Madge, drawing out the dagger again and looking on the blade. "Why does that name haunt me? Why, when I hear it, does my poor brain conceive such bloody thoughts, and wish to see him lying at my feet, dead, dead, dead? My brain reels; I grow faint. Ah!"

She uttered a gasping sob, and sunk senseless into the arms of Edward Gresham which were outstretched to receive her. He laid her gently down, and taking his flask, wet her lips and nostrils with spirits, while the chief, after bringing another flask of water, stood looking down upon them with a moody brow.

"Why is she so?" he said, touching his forehead. "The hand of the Manitou has been laid heavily upon her. Can you tell me why?"

"Yes. This poor girl, two years ago, was a happy bride, one of the fairest flowers that bloomed beside the Detroit. Her husband loved her tenderly, and she was very happy, but in an evil hour she met Gaston Delisle, a Frenchman, who boasted his good blood, and who looked disdainfully upon common men. This hound approached her with an insult, and she struck him in the face with her open hand. He renewed the insult at another time, and she called her husband, who came to her aid, and beat the dastard almost to death. Will Sinclair was a strong man and a brave one, and Delisle was a child in his hands. This Delisle was the nominal head of the French colony after Carillac left it, and he had about him a number of desperadoes of all classes. These waylaid Sinclair in the woods, and there we found his body, so man-

gled that his mother might have covered his face, not thinking it her son, but she, who lies here, knew him in a moment. The dagger with which he received his death-wound was beside him, and on the silver hilt, engraved, was the name of Gaston D'Hale, who had escaped. He was outlawed for the crime, and even now there is a price set upon his head. He was then betrothed to Rose St. Aubin, but she cast him off from that hour, with disdain.

"Did you ever see him?"

"Once only, and then I had only a fleeting glimpse. I don't think I should know him again."

"Look," said Ketadin, holding out his brawny arm. "Is Ketadin a strong man?"

"Yes."

"Is he true to his friends?"

"He is."

"Then listen to his words. One day he will meet this man with a dog's heart, and tear him limb from limb. It is spoken; a Delaware can not lie."

Even while he spoke, the young man had been working to bring poor Midge back to consciousness, but her swoon was like death.

"You will keep your word, my brave friend, and I pray God that the time may come soon. From the moment the poor girl saw the mangled form of her husband, whom she had followed from across the great salt water to this home in the wilderness, her poor brain gave way, and she was mad."

"But, why does she walk the woods? Was there no one to give her a place in the wigwam, and food to eat?"

"Many would have done so, but the poor child does not think her husband is dead, and seeks for him in the forest. To her it seems that he went away but yesterday, and she remembers the murder only when the name of the villain is spoken."

The nostrils of the Indian dilated, and he clutched the handle of his bow so fiercely that the blood almost started from between his finger-nails. At this moment the fainter woman drew a long breath; the color came back to her white face, and Edward raised her to a sitting position and supported her.

"Are you better?" he said, kindly.

"Yes, I am better. Where have I been; what has been done?"

"You fainted, Madge, because you have walked so far, and are weary. Had you not better go to Detroit, and wait there until Willie comes back?"

"Do you think it best?"

"Yes; because when he comes back he will not find you if you are away."

"I did not think of that," she said, springing up quickly. "Perhaps he has come home while I have been looking for him, and I must hasten back."

"Are you afraid to go back alone, Madge? If you are, one of us will go with you until you can see Detroit."

"Afraid? What is there to fear in the woods? When I am here, I am happier than at any other time. The birds sing to me; the running brooks make music; little spirits come out of the rocks and trees and talk to me. I saw three spirits yesterday, who were very kind, and said pleasant things to me, and made my sore heart glad."

"God surely protects the innocent and unsuspecting, Delaware," said Edward.

"The Manitou always watches over those upon whom his finger has been laid," replied the warrior. "Sister! When you are alone in the woods, can you talk with the spirits of the rocks and trees?"

"Yes, and they are beautiful; they are divine. When I lie down at night beneath the trees, they sing above me all the long night through, and give me rest."

Ketadin inclined his head slowly. He had been taught to believe that unfortunates like Madge were especially under the care of the Manitou, and that they were given the power of conversing with the spirits, which he believed inhabited the earth, and the various forms of vegetable life. It required but little faith upon his part to believe that Madge conversed freely with these spirits, and if his faith was simple, it was not the less firm.

"His untutored mind

Saw God in clouds or heard him in the wind."

Many a man of better lights than this poor savage, might

learn from him a lesson in faith. His noble heart had been touched by the story of Madge Sinclair's wrongs and sufferings, and he was fired by the strong desire to avenge them and bring peace to her troubled breast.

"I will go back with my sister and show her the shortest way," he said. "My brother will wait for me by the three tall pines."

"Agreed," said Edward. "Make what haste you can after you have shown her the way to Detroit."

The Indian nodded, and, beckoning to Madge to follow, he led the way through the forest, while Edward looked after them with a kindling eye.

"And that man is what they call a savage!" he said. "How many of my race would turn aside from a pressing duty to do an act of kindness to a friendless woman, no matter what her wrongs? All honor to such savages!"

He turned and plunged into the woods to the right. Traveling as the crow flies, turning neither to the right hand nor the left, he came out upon the river-bank within a hundred feet of the spot for which he had aimed, so accurate was his knowledge of woodcraft, especially in the section in which he found himself. Close to the river side, three towering pines grew together, so close that their roots interlaced. He sat down upon one of the huge roots as it protruded from the earth, and taking a book from his pouch began to read. Edward Gresham, scout and hunter though he was, had a good education and a taste for literature, and the book he was reading was an old work on astronomy lent him by one of the officers in the garrison.

It was a strange sight to see this man, in the depths of the American forest, solacing himself by a study of the wonders of astronomy. Yet he read like one who enjoyed it, but with ears open to detect the slightest change in the sounds of the forest about him.

All at once the book dropped into his pouch, and, turning suddenly, he plunged in between the roots of the three pines and disappeared. It was not done a moment too soon, for steps were heard, and two men entered the little glade beside the river. The first was the great chief Pontiac, moving on with the stately tread which seemed part of his nature, and

the second a white man, dressed in cloth of somber black, relieved by gold buttons and lace. About his waist was strapped a handsome belt, with a diamond in the buckle, and an elaborately-ornamented sword-hilt showed itself as he walked. He carried pistols of exquisite workmanship, and held in his hand a rifle of the most approved make, the stock inlaid with silver, engraved richly and showing the arms of a noble French house. His right arm was in a sling, and it was evident from his motions and the care with which he handled the limb, that he had been lately wounded. He wore a black felt hat with a drooping feather, while a crape mask of black was closely drawn over the upper part of his face, completely concealing it from view. He was evidently in pain, for his lips could be seen working nervously below his mask.

"My brother is weary and in pain," said the chief. "Let him be seated." The white man dropped upon a mossy knoll, and even the slight motion drew a snarl of pain from him.

"My brother failed last night," the chief said.

"Failed, yes, and all through the accursed luck which follows some men through life, no matter where they go."

"Let us say no more of that. The plans are well laid, and in a few suns not an Englishman will live in the Indian country. They laugh at Pontiac, and look at him as a poor Indian, but he has it here in his head, and will study out some plan for vengeance."

"It shall be so. These accursed villagers, who drove me out from among them, shall feel the weight of my hand. Chief, I am in burning torments until I can be avenged."

"Vengeance shall come," said the chief, solemnly. "It is the right of an Indian, and he will have it. A right of blood and death shall settle over the land, and when the dead rise, the English shall be no more."

"Have you laid your plans well for the taking of the other posts as well as Detroit?"

"A chief forgets nothing. The warriors are at work, and our plans can not fail."

"Remember one thing, however. This man Ojibwa is mine, to kill as I choose."

"My brother shall have him, though the Little Prophet hates him, and would have his scalp to hang in his lodge."

"The Little Prophet asks too much. Long before he received an injury from Edward Gresham, he had done me a wrong which nothing could atone for."

"Liar!" cried a hollow voice. "Tremble, for the hour of your doom is near at hand."

The masked man bounded to his feet, and even the impassible Indian faced hastily about, with a hand upon the hatchet.

"Pentiac, beware," cried the same hollow voice. "The spirit of the Pine speaks to you, and tells you to look to yourself. Not to the Yongets, but to the Indian, sorrow shall come."

The two conspirators looked at one another with awestruck and pallid faces, while that solemn voice pealed out its warning.

"Murderer, the spirit of your murdered victims are not laid. Their blood cries out from the earth for vengeance, and the hour of your doom is nigh. Beware!"

With one accord they turned and dashed headlong through the forest, each looking over his shoulder, full of deadly fear. A moment after, laughing heartily, Edward Gresham came out from his hiding-place beneath the roots.

CHAPTER V.

THE BLACK LEAGUE.

When left Captain St. Arden and the disguised visitor face to face, and for a moment the two stood regarding each other anxiously, each making no movement, but watching for opportunity. St. Arden was a man of middle age, stoutly built, with a handsome open face, full of frankness and benevolence. He looked steadily at the visitor, but the man had drawn his hat far down over his brows, and so that but when keeping his face hidden.

"Well, sir?" said St. Arden at length. "May I ask to what I am indebted for the honor of this visit, and where I address?"

"Another time, my dear, sir," replied the stranger, in a disguised voice. "At present I must leave you, as I have other business to attend to."

"Not yet, sir. I must know before you go why you are here. You certainly did not come without an object."

"Assuredly not, sir. I came to see you, but, as you were detained beyond my hour, I must bid you good-night."

"Who are you?" persisted the trader. "Rose, what does this mean? After the faith I have put in you, surely you will not turn traitress to me. Tell me who this man is, and what he seeks here."

"Do not attempt to stop him, for my sake," pleaded Rose. **"You must not; you shall not!"**

The stranger stood with folded arms, ready to take advantage of any opening for escape. But, as St. Aubin blocked up the door completely, escape that way was impossible without a struggle. The visitor was not a stranger to the power of muscle of the trader, and hesitated.

"Let him go free, father," pleaded Rose. "He is a desperate man, and may do you some harm."

"He has not harmed you, Rose, nor dared to offer you an insult!" cried her father.

"No, no; he was just going when you arrived at the door, so stand aside and let him pass."

"Ay, Gabriel, stout old boy, let me go safely away. I promise that you shall see me again soon," sneered the visitor.

"Rose, this is suspicious. Who and what is this man?"

"I dare not speak his name, but for my sake let him go free."

Gabriel glared at her for a moment without reply, and then rushed resolutely forward and seized the intruder by his throat—so quickly, indeed, that he had not time to draw a weapon, and required all his address to keep his footing. It was a desperate struggle, hand to hand and foot to foot. They rolled to the floor together, and in the struggle the latter put his hand to the head of the stranger, and his face was exposed, and St. Aubin uttered a cry of surprise.

"You, you, murderer! Have I trapped you at last?"

"Hold your hand, Gabriel de Aubin. You have forced me to show my face, and for that I will save your life."

"Father!" cried Rose.

"Silence, girl. Do you tell me that you have admitted this wretch into the house of an honest man? Ha, would you?"

The younger man was making a desperate effort to draw a weapon, but St. Aubin anticipated the effort, and held his wrists firmly, rising with his knee upon his breast.

"You have me," said the vanquished man, sullenly. "But, I tell you that it would have been better for you to die than to so degrade me."

"Have your own way, villain. You shall die by the gallows."

"Never! I would kill myself with my own hand."

"You shall have the opportunity. Bring a rope, Rose; I can take care of this scoundrel."

"Remember what I told you, Rose," hissed the prisoner. "If I am taken, *his* doom is sealed."

"Bring the rope!" thundered St. Aubin. "It hangs in yonder closet."

Rose did not move. She believed what had been told her, and that the villain had it in his power to destroy her lover, and she dared not aid her father. Instead, made desperate by the peril in which two she loved were placed, she threw herself upon her knees before her father and begged him to release the prisoner. "You know not what you are doing, father. Oh, my heart, my heart will break. Release him; let him escape! I beg it on my knee."

"Let him give up his weapons then," said St. Aubin, "and then I will suffer him to rise."

Rose stooped and snatched the pistols from the belt he wore beneath his cloak, and gave them to her father, who at once sprung to his feet.

"Yes," he said "and let me understand this thing."

The prisoner arose slowly, his eyes blazing with anger, and his hands closed so tightly that the blood started from beneath his finger-nails.

"Look you, sir," he said: "this will neither be forgotten nor forgiven."

"Put a bridle on your tongue, scoundrel that you are, for you are not free yet, by any means. Once more, why did you come here?"

"I came to see Rose, who was very glad to see me."

"False! Father, have I ever told you an untruth?"

"Never."

"Then listen to me. There does not remain in my heart a single spark of tenderness for that base man. He came here unexpectedly, and gained admission by professing to wish to see you, keeping his face covered. He gained nothing by his coming, and you have only to look at his face to be certain that I am telling you the truth."

"Your word is sufficient, my child, and you need say no more. But, why am I not to give him up to justice? Stand where you are or I will shoot you down like a dog, you rascal."

The last exclamation was drawn out by a movement of the prisoner in the direction of the door.

"You must let him go, father. When he has escaped, I will tell you why."

"Do, if you dare," cried the man, turning his fiery eyes upon the flushed face of the speaker.

"Deny me that, and I will not oppose my father longer."

"Since you insist upon it, let it be as you say, but not until I am gone. Have I liberty to depart, Gabriel St. Armand?"

"Yes, with this proviso. If you dare to show your face here again, nothing shall save you."

"I fear you not," replied the man, solemnly. "Give me back my weapons."

"You have your sword, and that is enough for you. Go your ways and remember my warning."

"I might give a warning too, my worthy friend, but I shall not waste my breath. Only bear in mind that I never yet was invited but I wiped out the wrong in the hot blood of the punisher. I did you good night!"

And waving his hand with a look of fierce indignation upon his face, the outlaw thrust upon his breast and turned away.

Upon receiving the sword, he paused for a moment, he glanced at the entrance, and then hurried down the stairs. A whispered word to him put the guard, who stood near the stair-headed balcony, and he crept in a quick and silent way to a low doorway, with a strong lock immediately he received the signal, and closed as quickly as he could. All eyes were

ness in the room by which he entered, but he proceeded boldly, like one who knew the way, and opened a door at the end of the room, showing a stairway leading downward, and dimly lighted. No other being had yet showed himself: the visitor passed down the stairs, and found himself in a thick-walled cellar, without windows, and lighted only by a single taper which burned in a socket in the wall. At the bottom of the stairs was a sort of cupboard, which he opened, and took therefrom a black cloak, with the *plastré de France* worked in white thread upon the breast; a pair of black gloves; a skull-cap of the same samber hue, provided with a thick visor, with openings only for the mouth, nostrils and eyes, and which, when put on, was a complete disguise.

He clothed himself as quickly as possible in this paraphernalia, and advanced to what appeared to be a solid wall, and taking up a heavy stone which lay there, struck twice upon the wall with all his force. He had hardly done so, when, as if by magic, a blaze of light streamed from the wall directly into his face, and a voice cried, in *French*:

"Who knocks?"

"A Brother of the Circle of Vengeance," replied the outlaw, in the same language.

"What does he seek here?"

"Knowledge and vengeance."

"Those portals are never closed to faithful brothers, who come here with those words upon their lips. Can you sign the sign?"

"I can."

"How?"

The panels of the cellar were raised, and a rapid sign given.

"The sign is true. Can you name the name?"

"When the ear of a brother is bent to receive it."

The panels closed behind him, and a word was uttered in his ear. He at once stood erect, and said:

"You are worthy, faithful and true. Pass on."

A heavy door, apparently painted so as to resemble the surrounding masonry, swung slowly upon its hinges, and the outlaw passed a black-robed figure holding a sword in his right hand. Beyond the door was a platform, three or four

feet wide, and then a flight of steps, eight in number, and at the bottom another door, from which issued two horrible figures, in blood-red robes, one holding a knife, and the other a spear, red with gore.

"Whom have we now?" cried the foremost. "What outside man dares enter the Circle of Vengeance without the password?"

"If I am an intruder," replied the outlaw, "let the knife sever my head from my body, the spear pierce my false heart, and fire consume my frame; I am ready for the test."

"Give us the true word."

"It is written on my breast."

"Show it."

The outlaw parted the garments on his breast and showed a circle, imprinted in Indian ink upon the bare skin. In the center of this circle were the letters, "C. of V.," and under this the Roman numeral "I."

"The Grand Commander!" cried the man who held the spear. "Let the gates of the North be open to receive him."

The door swung open, and he passed into a spacious cavern, lighted by many torches, and furnished with benches painted black. On four sides were raised seats draped in the same color, and upon the north a higher seat. Upon the benches were a number of men dressed in the same manner as the outlaw, and all the higher chairs were filled except the one on the north, to which seat the unworthy lover of Rose St. Arbin made his way, and faced the room, when all, as one man, rose and bowed before him, making the mystic sign of welcome.

"Be seated," he said, striking a column by his side with the hilt of a dagger which lay upon it. "Business secretary, is the circle complete?"

"It is, Grand Commandant."

"Have you called the roll, and made the chain?"

"I have."

"Nothing is wanting to make a complete chain?"

"Nothing."

"Is no link broken?"

"Not one."

"Have you tested each link to see that it has no flaw or weakness? Finished work alone should be brought into the Mystic Circle."

"I have tested each link by fire, sword and spear, and all are worthy of admittance to the chain."

"My brothers, you have heard the report of the brother secretary. Have any of you cause to think that he is wrong? Let any speak, north, south, east or west, from the Grand Commandant in the north to the lowest neophyte at his left hand. I wait."

"All are worthy," was the solemn reply from all sides.

"Let it be written; I order it so."

"It is written," replied the secretary.

"My brothers," said the Grand Commandant, rising in his place, "you know the object of this association and its teachings. All of you have groined in spirit as we saw the redcoats possess the land which had been built up by Frenchmen, and your hearts glowed with wrath at the insult offered to the laws on the white flag. Loving France as we do, it is for the object of avenging her wrongs that I see you here, bound together in one chain too strong for mortal hands to break. We have not been idle in these months which have passed, and I can report good progress in the true cause. Our allies, the Indians, are making ready for their part of the work, and when the blow is struck, it will be a complete and final one. The signal will soon be given. Have any of you a private wrong to avenge?"

"I denounce Major Gladwyn, commandant," said one.

"Make the record!"

"I denounce Gabriel St. Arden, who, a Frenchman born, will not join us against the enemies of his country," said another.

"Let his name be written. I myself denounce Edward Johnson, known as the traitor, and would have his name written in red, that he may be pointed at once. There is a plot afoot against the Indian Nation, his friend and comrade, and an enemy of France who deserves to die. Write his name in red."

"I have so written it, Grand Commandant," replied the secretary.

"I myself will deal with these two, for the good of the order. Let the rest remain until our next meeting, if you are so agreed. Be ready for the signal when it is given, and may it come speedily. Disperse."

The black-robed figures stole off, one by one, and scattered about the various houses inside the fortress, until none remained except the Grand Commandant and the secretary.

"Where are these Indians, Antienne?" said he.

"Hidden at my house."

"Let us go at once. Edward Gresham and that red horned Ketadin, must die to-night."

CHAPTER VI.

FILING THE RIFLES.

Rose, with some difficulty, succeeded in satisfying her father that it was better to let the outlaw escape. He did not share in her dread of what the man might be able to do to Edward Gresham, knowing nothing of the secret order and the power it had within the fortress. He had been approached many times in relation to a plan which some of his countrymen had formed to redeem Detroit from English rule, but had uniformly refused to have any thing to do with it. He was one of those men who accept the situation gracefully, and he had long ago seen that the power of his country was on the wane in this world, and that he could himself save the English colonies most through in the end, through the French might against it.

He was not, however, who approached him in relation to the proposed rescue, a devoted patriot, his heart was, or at least was not, in the cause, and refused to identify himself with them.

He had chosen Detroit as a home, and meant to live and die there, and, consequently, wished to maintain his influence with the reigning powers.

Yet he was satisfied that there was much to be learned among

the Indians. Most of his countrymen scouted the idea, especially those who wished him to join the Mystic Circle, but his trade with the Indians gave him an opportunity to see the growing discontent among them. Pontiac's warning came in time to make his guess doubly sure, and he was already preparing for the worst. But even he did not dream how widespread and complete the conspiracy was, and that it included the entire chain of forts in the possession of the English, which had fallen when Rodgers came against them with his smaller force.

He started out, next day, upon a trailing visit to the Ottawas, hoping to draw something more from Pontiac. Rose was un-*easy*, and could not remain quietly in the house. She went into the fort, and the first sight she saw was the funeral procession of poor Pierre Guillert, and Edward Gresham walking next to the bier. After the funeral he had an opportunity of speaking with her for a moment, and telling her the manner of the old cook's death.

"You are in danger, Edward," she said. "This, following so close upon the warning, means more than you think, and you must be very careful."

"I know that I have enemies."

"You have one enemy whom you have most cause to fear—a vindictive villain, to whom blood is a pastime. This man will kill you if he can," she said.

"What is his name?"

"Edward, I have promised not to tell it, and I can not break my word."

"Does your father know it?"

"Do not ask it. You are safe for the present—he promised me that."

"Safe? I should have been killed if Pierre had not occupied my room that night instead of myself. But, let it pass, if you care more for a promise to a Indian than for my safety."

"Edward?" she cried, sadly, "you at least ought to know better than that."

"I may wrong you: perhaps I do, but why not tell me the name?"

"I dare not, Edward."

"Then say no more about it," he said, quietly, "and let me go on my way blindfold. I was about to ask a favor of you, and now I am half-afraid to do it."

"Ask it," she said, eagerly.

At this moment Edward looked up and saw a Frenchman named Entienne Barbier standing near at hand, leaning against a tree, apparently passing the time carelessly, and without any definite object, but, with an eye which told a secret. He was listening, but Edward was not the person to show his suspicions and he nodded to the man, without moving a muscle of his face.

"Wait for me," he said in a whisper to Rose. "That fellow is listening to our conversation, and I have a few words to say to him."

"Do not quarrel with him, Edward."

"Not I; you shall see us greet one another with the utmost politeness, although I am far from certain that he had no part in the assault of last night."

He left her, and approached Barbier, who did not change his position.

"This was a bad business, Entienne," he said. "I would give all I hope to gain this season to know the author of this mischief."

"Pierre was a good fellow," said Entienne, slowly, turning his dark face to the speaker. "Rather fond of you French, but that was not a grave crime, as he was not alone in it. I am really sorry for poor Pierre."

"He was a faithful, true-hearted man, and gave his life for mine. I am determined to find the author of this great crime."

"Indians, of course."

"Two Indians and two white men disguised as savages. One man had a sword; does it not seem strange to you that an Indian should have such a weapon?"

"Sure," muttered Entienne, below his breath. "This fellow has keen eyes."

"Did you mark the disguised white men so as to get any clue to them, Gresham?" he added, aloud.

"One of them was about your size and build, as far as I can judge. He was the first to run, so that I can judge very

little of him. The other was face to face with me for three or four minutes before he fled, and I gave him a mark to remember him by—the villain!”

“How do you know?”

“Because I found this,” said Edward, holding up the bottle which contained the severed finger, at which Entienne looked with terrified eyes.

“Take it away—take it away!” he cried, spreading out his hands before his face. “Pah! it turns me sick.”

“It takes but a trifle to do that, friend Barbier,” said Edward, putting up the bottle. “That is not all; what do you say to *this* for a clue?”

He held up his hand upon which sparkled the ring, which had been found upon the severed finger, and a baleful light came into the eyes of Barbier.

“That is indeed a clue,” he said. “Will you let me look at it?”

“Certainly; do you recognize the ring? There is a peculiarity about it, which I did not notice until this morning. The setting forms the letters ‘C of V,’ and the numeral 1. I wonder what that signifies?”

“How should I know?” replied Barbier, visibly disturbed. “I must bid you a good-day, as I have work to do.”

He hurried away, and Edward looked after him with a keen searching glance, his eyes sparkling with animation.

“You are a fox, Entienne Barbier, but the cutest fox is outwitted at last, and so shall you be. ‘C of V,’ I wonder what that means?”

He turned back to where Rose stood waiting for him.

“Let us walk toward the fortress,” he said. “I must find Hiram, and go on upon my work. The favor I desired to ask of you was this:—Can you, by any means, make an errand to the Pottawatomie village to-day?”

“Easy; there is an Indian girl in the village who sometimes does my work for me and is very fond of me. I can get Mr. David Huges to take me over in his canoe.”

“I will go with a canoe, and perhaps it is better to take a person of her kind, for they will suspect nothing.”

“What am I to do?”

“Go through the village, and, as you go, have your eyes

open, and immediately upon your return tell me what you have seen. Note carefully what the warriors are about, and whether they are well armed. You understand me."

"When shall I go!"

"As soon as possible, but be particularly careful not to do any thing to arouse their suspicions. You are well known and liked in the village, and may go in safety. They will take no pains to hide their movements from you, if what I suspect is true."

"There is David Hughes now. Call him to us."

The youngster, when hailed, came up to them quickly, and showed a small form, a shrewd visage, which proclaimed him a true border boy.

"Davy, my lad," said Edward, "Miss Rose wants to go to the Portawatonic village. Can you take her across the river?"

"You bet I can. I know all about this river, I do!"

"And, mind you don't say any thing about my hiring you. When you come back from the trip I'll give you two Spanish milled dollars."

"I'm your man," said Davy. "When do you want to go, miss?"

"Now; as soon as you can."

"Then you come right along, for I'm always ready for a job," said Davy.

The lovers parted with a mutual pressure of the hand, he to go out upon his perilous work, and she to perform an act not less dangerous, for who could say what might result from her visit? They reached the river side, where Davy brought out his canoe, a safe, commodious craft which Davy well knew how to handle. She seated herself in the center of the light boat, while Davy stood up in the stern, sweeping the water with a nervous force hardly to be looked for in one so young. They passed many canoes going and returning, for of late the Indians had made themselves very free in the village, going and coming at all hours. Most of those who passed knew Rose, and saluted her kindly as they came along.

"Them's dirty-looking thieves," said the boy. "Do ye see that little island over yonder, with the high tree in the center?"

"Yes."

"That's whar Pontiac lives in the summer time. He's too big an animal to live with the common truck. Jinks; I'm afraid of that Injun!"

"Why, Davy?"

"He won't look good out of his eyes, you know. The critter is up to some mischief, I reckon."

"Don't talk in that way among the Indians, Davy, or you may get into trouble."

"Whew! You don't think I'm such a sof'ly as to blow them round cheeks are round, do ye? Not any; not of I know it, but I keep up a powerful thinkin', and to my mind they're a greedy, sneaky, nasty, treacherous crowd; but, don't tell I said so, 'cause when I'm with 'em I likes to have 'em think they're angels without the wings. Set steady; there's a shallow here."

She sat quiet until the dangerous spot was passed, Davy working industriously to keep the head of the canoe to the stream, and make some headway across the current.

"There's one gal in this yer village that is a Whoosh-er," said Davy, as he plied the paddle.

"A—what, Davy?"

"A Whoosh-er, an astoni-her, a *crusher*! Don't understand English, yez don't, 'cause yer a French gal, but it means she hit easy hard. Her name is Katherine, and the Indians call her *Wata-wa*. Danno what in thunder it means."

"Katherine is a beautiful girl, and a good one. Perhaps I would bring her back with me if your canoe would carry three."

"I'm tryin' now? I guess it will?" replied Davy. "I don't like to take her to the village, for that Delaware always hez something to say to her over thar, and I'm goin' to marry her when I git a farm."

"Are you, Davy?" said Rose, laughing.

"Yessir, I am! She ain't quite so white as you are, but she ain't got much Injun in her, that's a fact."

By this time they were very close to the eastern shore, and Davy gave his canoe a steer which carried her to drift to the bank, when he helped her to land her, and helped Rose out.

"I hope you've thought of an amant in the village, Miss Rose: 'twon't do to go thar without."

"Yes, I have come to ask Katherine to keep me company in my house for a few days, while my father is away, and to buy some maple sugar and venison. Is that a good errand?"

"That 'll do; you ain't nobody's *guy*, you ain't! Hello, what's that gratin'? They ain't gone into the nutmeg business in the village, have they?"

The village was some yards away, and they could see that the spaces between the lodges were crowded with Indians, most of them seated upon the ground, and very busily at work. Pushing the boat high up on the bank, Davy stopped and listened. The harsh sound grew louder, and he shook his head evidently in doubt. Rose left him with the canoe, and crossing a little knoll came suddenly into the village—so suddenly indeed that the warriors did not notice her and kept at their work. Such activity on the part of the Indian men was very uncommon, except when they were at war. She looked at them closely, without appearing to do so, and saw that all of them were employed in a very strange manner. They had files, begged, borrowed or stolen, as the case might be, and were engaged in *fil*ing off their rifle barrels, so as to leave them less than a yard in length. What could it mean?

Rose was the daughter of a frontiersman, and, as such, accustomed to danger; but now she felt her blood turn cold in her veins at the sight. She knew how much the Indians loved their rifles, and that the motive must be a very deep one which would induce them to render their favorite weapons useless except at a short distance. She advanced to the center of the village, and, as her presence became known, a peculiar cry ran through the rude street. Every Indian darted into his lodge, but came out after leaving his rifle inside, sauntering about with careless ease, while some of the women gathered about Rose and jabbered to her as only Indian women can, evidently to distract her attention. She saw through the artifice, but it was too late; she had seen enough, more than enough, to satisfy her that they meant mischief, but, too acute to leave the village hastily, she sent the Indian women this way and that in quest of the articles she meant to buy, and proceeded herself to search for Katherine, the situation of whose lodge she well knew. Turning an angle

of a cabin, a man sprung forward and seized her by the arm, and she uttered a cry of horror as she recognized the outlawed Frenchman, the Grand Commandant of the Circle of Vengeance !

CHAPTER VII.

DAVY'S TRIUMPH.

THE man still wore his mask, but Rose knew him, and struggled to free herself from his fierce grasp. "At last, at last !" he muttered. "You have put yourself into my power."

"Stand back, sir," replied Rose. "How dare you lay a finger on my person after what has passed ?"

He laughed scornfully. "My dear girl, do you think that because your father chooses to lay his orders upon me when I am in his power, that I am green enough to obey them after I am out of his hands ?"

The girl cried out for help, and it came. Davy Hughes had been sitting by the side of his canoe, waiting for the coming of his fair friend, and watching the canoes of the Indians passing to and fro in indolent ease, when he heard the voice of Rose crying out for help, as if in imminent peril. Seizing up a paddle, he ran at full speed over the brow of the hill and into the village, where he saw Rose struggling in the strong grasp of a masked man, who was dragging her away. Thinking of nothing but her peril, the boy dashed forward, and the first knowledge of his presence which the captor received was a rap on the head which made his ears sing and myriads of stars dance before his eyes. Staggering back from the shock, he sunk upon his knee, and, as the blur passed from his eyes, he saw the brave boy standing between him and Rose, with the paddle heaved back over his shoulder, ready to strike again if necessary.

"Wah—yip," yelled the boy. "Waken up and walk careful ! What do you put your dirty hands on Miss Rose for ?"

"You young scoundrel," hissed the outlaw, leaping up with his hand upon his forehead. "How dare you strike me?"

"Shall I give him another, Miss Rose?" cried Davy, eagerly. "Oh, say yes, and I'll give it to him, *good!*"

"Do not strike him again, you brave, good boy," said Rose. "Oh, I am so thankful to you for coming to help me, and Edward will thank you too."

"That's enough," said Davy, gruffly. "If the Trailer feels kind o' grateful to me, I'll tell you how he kin git even, if he'll do it. Stand off, you *gawd!*; don't go for to come nigh me, or I'll give you one that'll make you see more stars than thar is in a clear sky on a frosty night."

At this moment there was a commotion in the crowd of frightened Indian women who had gathered, and they scattered like sheep as the towering form of Pontiac passed through, and he faced the insulter with an ominous look in his fierce eyes.

"What is this, my brother?" he said. "I hear a tumult and would know the cause."

"That spawn of the reptile has dared to strike me," replied the outlaw, pointing at Davy Hughes.

"Yes, and I'll hit you ag'in if you put a hand on Miss Rose, you scum of the earth! Come, I ain't afraid of you, you durned French sneak."

"Bright Star," said Pontiac, his grim face relaxing, as it always did in the presence of Rose, "you are welcome to the village. Has any man dared to do you wrong while here?"

"He has," replied Rose. "He seized upon me, and swore that I should go with him."

"Has my brother done this?" demanded Pontiac, turning to the outlaw.

"She is mine, and I will have her," replied the other, fiercely.

"What claim has my brother upon the Bright Star?"

"She is to be my wife."

"It is false," replied Rose, indignantly. "I despise him."

"I have looked upon the customs of white men," said Pontiac, "and I have seen that they are very tender to their women when they love them. My brother has done a great wrong this day, and has wronged the hospitality of Pontiac."

See: I went to Detroit and said to the Bright Star and to her father, the good trader, 'You are always welcome to the lodges of the tribe,' and yet, the first time she comes she has been insulted. My brother, if an Indian had done it, I would have laid him dead at my feet."

"You have no right to interfere in this, Pontiac; it is a private matter."

"This is my village. The Bright Star shall be safe here always."

"And you mean to take her out of my hands, chief?"

"She is as safe here as in her father's lodge," replied Pontiac, with a kindly smile. "If my brother ever again does a wrong to the Bright Star, he makes an enemy of Pontiac, who has loved him well."

"And I am not to punish that young dog who struck me with his paddle?"

"The boy is brave and will make a warrior," replied Pontiac, laying his hand protectingly upon the shoulder of the brave girl. "I will not see him wronged by you or any man."

"I have it as you will," replied the outlaw; "but I will not forget it in the time to come."

Saying this, he started rapidly away and disappeared among the bushes. The chief and outlaw had just returned from their conference at the three places where they had been so disappointed by the mysterious voices speaking from the earth. After their first fear left them they had gone down to the river bank, and managed to find a canoe, in which they had proceeded to the village.

"What my daughter must and take food after the perils of the hour?" said Pontiac.

"I have no time, chief, but must return to Detroit at once."

"Will the good trader come soon to the lodge of the Outlaw?"

"He says he will."

"It is good; Pontiac will welcome him to his village. How the words which the chief said he sunk into the ears of the Bright Star, and will she remember?"

"I have not forgotten. Now let me tell you a good-by, and

find Katherine, whom I wish to take back to Detroit with me. If you will be so kind, I should like to have you send some venison and sugar to my canoe, and I will pay for them."

"May not Pontiac give these things to a friend? Look; we will not take money from the hand of the daughter of the good trader for a little venison and sugar."

He called to one of the braves who was lounging near, and gave him an order in the Indian tongue. The man moved away with alacrity to perform his bidding, and Pontiac beckoned to a woman to approach and sent her for Katherine. In a few moments a graceful girl, dressed in a neat Indian costume, with a mild, and strangely-beautiful face, came forward. This was Wa-ta-wa, or Katherine, for by that name she was known among the whites. She approached Rose with a beaming smile, and taking her hand pressed it to her lips; while Pontiac looked at these two types of female beauty, the blonde and the brunette, with undiminished admiration.

"What is the will of the Bright Star with Katherine?" said the Indian girl.

"Will you come to Detroit, and stay with me for a few days?"

Katherine looked inquiringly at the chief, and he nodded slightly. The chief then drew Katherine aside, and conversed with her earnestly in the Indian tongue for some minutes. Just then Davy, who had accompanied the Indian sent away by Pontiac, came back and said that a good supply of sugar and venison were in the canoe, and that he was ready to go. The lad winked at Katherine, who showed her white teeth in a gay laugh.

"See," she said; "this boy will be a chief, and he says that when he is a man he will make me his wife!"

"He is a brave boy, and I love him," said Rose. "He has protected me from a bad man."

"The man who covers his face, and wears the shining wampum in his belt?"

"Yes."

"He is a wicked man, for he spoke wicked words to Katherine. The Bright Star must not cross his path, for his anger is terrible."

"I'll give him a wiper that'll clean him off the face of the earth," said Davy, stoutly.

"I have no doubt you would if you could, Davy."

"But ye I would. He aint no great shakes, that feller."

They were seen in the canoe, and crossing the river in the direction of Detroit. This course was easier than the upward one, and in a short time they landed. Davy undertook to bring up the venison and sugar, while Rose hurried home, accompanied by Katherine. The first object which they saw upon reaching the gate was Ketadin, leaning against a post, apparently waiting for them. Half-crouching on the earth beside him was the worn and tattered figure of Wild Madge, the Indian wife of poor Willie Sinclair. The eyes of Katherine brightened as she saw the stately form of the Delaware, and although he managed to keep up an expression of complete staidness, it was an inner failure on his part, for his joy at meeting her showed itself in his face. Rose knew how matters stood between the redoubted Delaware and Katherine, and was pleased at bringing them together.

"Who have we here, Ketadin?" she said, looking at Madge.

"Poor woman; Gresham sent her from the woods."

"Who is she?"

"Have you known her, child?" said Madge, in a petulant voice.

"I am Madge Sinclair; surely you know my Willie."

"Willie Sinclair?"

"Yes, have you seen him?" demanded the woman, eagerly.

"No," replied Rose, sadly. "Come into the house and rest, for you must be very weary."

"Yes, I am weary, but Gresham told me that Willie might be here. I am so sorry that he has not come."

Rose knew the touching story of this woman's life, and felt a ready sympathy for her in her sorrows. Her acute mind at once took in Edward's object in sending Madge. They entered the kitchen. Ketadin took the opportunity to press close to Katherine and look into her eyes, which at once flashed before his own. They had broken the stick of betrothal, and would have been man and wife before this but

for the side which the Delaware took in the approaching struggle. At this moment Davy came into the kitchen, and looked daggers at the chief as he laid down a load of venison.

"If that Injan ain't here already, Miss Rose! Say, do you think it fair to let him cut in on me, that way?"

"What is the matter, Davy?" said Rose, looking up, while she was taking off the ranged sash which Malise wore upon her shoulders.

"Matter? Matter enuff, I reckon! That Injan ain't no call to cut in and talk to Katherine before I get a chance."

Thus grumbling, the boy took himself to the canoe for another load, and worked steadily until all had been brought up. In the meantime Rose prevailed upon Midge to lie down upon her bed and rest, and she was soon sleeping heavily.

"Where is Edward, chief?" asked Rose.

"He is with Gladwyn at the fort."

"Go to him at once, and tell him that I have news of importance. Or stay; you remain here with Katherine, and take care of her, and I will go myself."

Dropping her hat, she left the house, and passing rapidly through the scattered suburb, entered the palisaded enclosure of the fort. As she reached the fort gates, she met Antienne Barbier, who gave her a very ambiguous look and smile as she entered.

"Edward is right about that man," she said. "He has a strangely forbidding look, and I always feel a sense of danger when I meet his evil eye. I believe he is in some way connected with the Jesuits."

She passed on and rapped at a door, when an orderly appeared. Finding in her name to Major Gladwyn, she was at once admitted, to find Edward with the major and two others, but ill-looking man in a military uniform, who was lounging at his length upon a sofa while he received the report of the scout, who was leaning over a small table upon which stood a decanter and glasses.

"Here is Rose," said Edward. "I admit that we might be hasty in this matter, but we can not be too secure. Rose, what is your report?"

"Let the lady be seated," commanded Gladwyn, rising to

a sitting posture. "Will you take some refreshment, Miss Rose?"

"Thank you, I wish for nothing, but I have something very important to tell you."

"I will hear it," said Ghalwyn, with an incredulous look; "but this is a time of strange misceptions."

Rose detailed her visit to the Indian village, and when she told them of the Indians firing off their rifles, Edward started to his feet.

"Do you hear that, major? Now will you believe that we are in danger?"

"It looks suspicious, I admit," said the other, in an indolent tone. "Why will these fellows persist in making us trouble when we were getting on so finely?"

The door opened and the orderly came in. "A message from Pontiac," he said, and held out a strip of white paper, written closely over in French.

The three looked at it and at one another. It was a demand for a conference with Pontiac and sixty leading chiefs and warriors of the Three Nations, of whom Pontiac was the head, upon the next day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VICTIM OF THE CIRCLE.

The night was one of darkness in the fort. Most of the officers found some evil, for they had been called to a conference, and been warned to be especially upon their guard during the evening hours, and to allow no one to pass in or out. Edward returned with Rose after the meeting in Captain's room, but was in the last gate before reaching his quarters. As he approached his door, he became aware that a white paper was attached to it, pinned to the wood by a small dagger. Pulling out the blade carefully, he severed the paper and took it in his hand. Upon the letter, in red ink, was the outline of a human hand grasping a sword, and below it these words:

“Edward Gresham, the Traitor : . .

*“Twice you have been warned, but you would not heed. Nothing can save you now ; your blood must flow. Beware the sword of the—
C. of V.”*

“Unpa !” muttered Edward. *“My mysterious friends are at work again, but their warning shall not be all unheeded. We shall see.”*

Ketadin soon joined him. The sentries had been doubled upon the ramparts of Fort Detroit, and save these, no one was in the street. About one o'clock a side-door in the house next to Gresham's opened, and there stole out three sombre figures in masks and cloaks, and crept along in the shadow of the buildings until they reached the rear door of Gresham's place. Evidently the lock had been tampered with, for it required but a slight effort on the part of one of the disguised men to open it without noise, and, as it swung back upon its hinges, they stole in, closed the door behind them, and were ready for their bloody work.

They were now in the rear room of the little house, generally used as a kitchen. The darkness was complete, but one of the intruders sprung the slide of a dark-lantern, letting a faint light fall upon the room. The men moved noiselessly, for their feet were bare, and not a creaking board or the rustle of clothing betrayed their presence. Who were these ?

The appointed messengers of the Circle of Vengeance, come to perform the work of the order !

As they advanced to open the door which led into the sitting room, they were conscious of a slight rustling sound and pause. The door began to swing slowly on its hinges. Each man bared his dagger as the door opened to its extreme width, apparently without the agency of human hands. They waited in silence, expecting to see either Ketadin or Edward ; but, instead, there glided through the doorway a figure which they well knew—the form of Pierre Gilbert, the dead voyageur ! Behind him a dim light burned, and the garments in which he was clothed were spotted with blood from his many wounds, and his face was red with gore.

He advanced with that gliding, noiseless motion characteristic of the spirits of the other world, with one hand holding up an accusing finger pointed at the three as villains, and the

other raised to heaven, as if appealing to its justice. A single look was sufficient. With cries of horror, the three men bounded to the door by which they had entered, only to find it locked upon the other side. They threw themselves against it with frantic violence, but it resisted their efforts, while that dreadful figure stood in the center of the room, pointing its bloody finger at them.

"It was not I—it was not I, Pierre!" cried one of the intruders, in a tone of frenzy. "Others struck you down."

Then another terrible figure bounded in, holding in one hand a blazing torch. It was a gigantic form, clothed in a white sheet, spotted with gore, and a bloody knife in its right hand. The terrified men dashed straight at the window of the kitchen, carrying sash and all into the street. Two of them rose, pale and bleeding, but a third remained, struggling in the grasp of the strange being who had entered last. He was forced down, a handkerchief stuffed into his mouth, and, closely bound, was dragged into an inner room, where he was left to himself, for the phantoms disappeared as suddenly as they had come. Five minutes after, Edward Gresham came into the room with a lamp in his hand and stooped over him.

"Ha! who are you, and what are you doing here?"

The prisoner of course could not speak, but he uttered some inarticulate sounds. Edward removed his hat and held the lamp close to his face, and recognized in him one of the most turbulent spirits among the French residents, and a great friend of **Entienne Barbier**.

"Ah, **Jacques Guillen**, my friend, this is yours! If, it seems. Now, then, come in here, and bring your knife."

The **Dan** was glibbed in and kneeled beside the shrinking wretch, passing his hand over the crown of his head in a fearfully suggestive manner.

"**Scalp!** What are you about to do, Gresham?" he cried, as Edward removed the gag. "Don't let the accused Indian touch me."

"My dear friend **Jacques**," said Edward, pleasantly, "how would you like to be scalped?"

"Scalped?"

"Yes."

"You surely do not mean it?"

"I don't mean any thing else. You are about to die unless you tell at once and truly what you are doing here."

"Silly! I won't tell you! Do you think me a fool?"

"On the contrary, I think you are a very wise man. I should consider you what you have called yourself if you refused to answer questions so earnestly put as mine are."

"I will not betray my trust."

"Scalp him, Ketadin."

The Indian twined his hand in the long locks of the Frenchman in a scientific manner, drew his knife, and made an incision in the scalp of the prisoner, who uttered a cry of horror.

"Help, help, they murder me!" he cried.

"Will you answer my questions?"

"Yes, yes."

"Good; you know what I asked you?"

"I came to kill you."

"Who sent you?"

"The friends of Little Prophet."

"Were you incited by Pontiac?"

"Yes."

"You expect me to swallow this, my dear Jacques?"

"I am telling you the truth."

"Oh, no; you are lying to me. I am not so easily deceived as not to know that an Indian never sent this."

He held up the paper, upon which was written the last warning of the Circle of Vengeance. The man cowered at the sight, and a look of fear passed over his face.

"What does 'C. of V.' mean?" demanded the young man.

"How should I know?"

"Go ahead, Ketadin," said Elward. "This man is determined to die."

Again he felt the knife-point applied to his naked flesh, and shrieked in terror.

"I will tell, I will reveal all, and take the consequences."

"You have decided wisely, young man. Release him, Ketadin, but, by heaven, if he balks again he is a dead man."

"Will you promise me, if I reveal all, and leave the order of which I am a member, that I shall go free?"

"If your revelation is of sufficient importance to justify it, I promise not to appear against you for your part in this affair."

"Let us understand one another perfectly. I can reveal the secrets of an order, banded together for the express purpose of exterminating the English residents and garrison at every point from Presque Isle to Michilimackinac. Would that be sufficient to free me?"

"It would."

"And you promise, if I do this, upon your honor not to let me suffer?"

"I do."

"Then there is my hand, and I will reveal every thing."

At this moment a masked face rose to a level with the window, and peered curiously in through the half-closed shutters. Jacques Grillon was lifted to a chair, facing the window. Ketakin and Edward stood in front, facing him, the young scout seated and the Indian standing near with folded arms.

"You have promised to betray these villains, and they deserve it," said Edward. "Go on."

"You must know—" began Grillon.

Just then a pistol cracked, and Jacques Grillon, stricken through the breast by the ball, fell forward upon his face. They ran to lift him, and as they did so, a great gush of blood sprang from his wounded breast, and a gray pallor, the emblem of death, crept over his dark face. Ketakin swung open the door and rushed out, but no one could be seen. Edward supported the dying wretch upon his knee and looked into his face.

"Speak, if you can, and tell me who has done this murder."

The man essayed to speak, but twice the words died upon his lips. Edward bent close and heard these disconnected words:

"Charles of Vergennes—Lawrence—Patience Pardee—and Gaston Delisle—ah!"

The man lay motionless, convulsive spasm, a great gush of blood springing from his wounded breast, and his soul had fled forever, with the secrets of the Order of Vergennes locked forever in his breast.

"This is horrible," said Edward, as he laid the body down. "Ketadin, did you see the murderer?"

"No, he had fled. The English have many enemies in Detroit, who will open their doors to cover such men as these."

"The man deserved his fate, for, after all, he came here to do a murder, perhaps two, at the bidding of the men by whom he has been slain. Raise the body and carry it into the kitchen."

They took up the corpse and laid it on the kitchen table, and Edward brought a white sheet and covered it. By this time the alarm had been given and the drums began to beat, calling out the troops, for a pistol shot by night in such times as these was enough to startle the garrison. Edward snatched up his cap, and, accompanied by Ketadin, ran to the major's quarters to tell him the cause of the alarm, and advise him to keep quiet about it. They found Gladwyn, half-dressed, just leaving his quarters to ascertain the cause of the alarm, and in as few words as possible told him the story.

Gladwyn called an orderly.

"Go to Captain Rodgers and tell him that there is no cause for alarm."

"Yes, sir."

"Order him, in my name, to send the troops back to their quarters, and let me have a guard of ten of the rangers at once."

The orderly hurried away, while the major led the way to his private room.

"I will go with you and examine this body when the guard arrives," said Gladwyn. "There they are."

A moment later appeared the column of the guard. The major, followed by Gladwyn and his red friend, went down the street, to Edward's house. Leaving the guard at the door, they entered. Once in the kitchen and a lamp kindled, all stood back in horror. The floor no longer covered the body; the sheet had been cut, and a long dagger driven into his heart, planting upon his breast a paper upon which they read these words:

"The Traitor, Jacques Gillen. Thus the Circle of Vengeance punished a false one. Look, and tremble. C or V."

CHAPTER IX.

THE STORM BREAKS.

THAT night, under cover of the darkness, Ketadin stole out of the fort, with orders to hurry down the coast toward Niagara, to meet Lieutenant Cayler and his men, already believed to be on their way to join the garrison, and who might thus be made to hasten their course and reach Detroit before the storm burst upon them. Early in the morning Edward might have been seen pacing to and fro among the traders' huts and wigwags, giving them orders in a low tone of voice. The day broke clear and cloudless, and the sun, when it rose, shone upon green fields and happy dwellings. As the mists lifted from the earth, the garrison saw that the river was alive with canoes, coming from the eastern shore. These canoes appeared to contain only two or three warriors each, but the experienced eyes of the hardy men noting how heavily they moved, and how low they sank in the water, suspected that many more Indians than could be seen lay upon the bottom of the light water-craft.

The small cannon behind the fort soon was crowded with Indian women and children, and strong warriors, each wrapped in a long blanket, carefully held about their persons. All moved restlessly to and fro, apparently eager for the onset of battle which was expected between the tribes. The men, after standing about for a while, would move carefully toward the guns, and all were ready to battle. Had the women gone mad, or was this a subtle scheme to crush the warriors of the tribe?

Canoes kept coming in canoes from the eastern shore, and at the bow of each a chief of the various tribes blazing in his war-paint, waved down the river-road. A historian of the time gives the following account of this terrible battle:

At the attack the great war-chief and his treacherous followers surrounded the fort, and the gateway was thronged with their savage forms. All were wrapped to the throat in their colored blankets. Some were crested with hawk, eagle,

er raven plumes; others had shaved their heads, leaving only the fluttering scalp-lock on the crown; while others, again, wore their long black hair flowing loosely at their backs, or wildly hanging about their brows like a lion's mane. Their bold, yet crafty features, their cheeks besmared with ochre and vermilion, white lead and soot, their keen, deep-set eyes gleaming in their sockets, like those of a rattlesnake, gave them an aspect grim, uncouth and horrible. For the most part they were tall, strong men, and all had a gait and bearing of peculiar stateliness."

At the right hand of Pontiac strode a man about the same height as himself, garbed in barbarous ornaments, and painted in alternate bars of ochre and vermilion. This man's hair was confined in a sort of head-dress of eagle-feathers, and he seemed a fit leader for this terrible band. As they crossed the gateway these savage chiefs exchanged looks of hatred and surprise, for they saw that their coming had been prepared for in a way they had not anticipated. On either hand as they passed through the gateway, the regular garrison of the fort, about one hundred and thirty in number, were drawn up in single lines, through which the chiefs must pass to reach the quarters of the council-house. Their arms and accoutrements glittered brightly in the sunrays, and upon every face was a look of stern determination which boded ill for the Indians when the struggle began. Passing through this line, Pontiac saw other bodies of men, whom he had greater reason to fear than even the regulars. These were the half-wild crews of the traders and hangers-on of the garrison, hunters, trappers and voyagers—men who knew all the tricks of Indian fighting, and could fight them on their own ground and in their own way. Per the report, too, that Edward the Indian was present to and fro among these men, who were armed to the teeth, who pointed to this one, calling attention to that, and apparently warning them to be fully on their guard. Then, close to the top of a drum, and a strain of music could be heard and Pontiac saw that his great summer for taking the English by surprise had fallen to the ground. Windows opened as the Indians passed, and the white faces of women and children looked at them, full of loathing and anxious fears.

Disappointed as he was, this able chief knew well how to mask his chagrin under the screen of Indian stoicism, although some of the younger chiefs in a more real and exchanged glances of defiance with the citizens and soldiers.

They entered the hotel we found to end, and reached the doors of the council house—a low wooden building upon the bank of the river. Here they were received with great ceremony by Gladwyn and his officers, who were in uniform, and wore their weapons ostentatiously displayed. There was a look of determination upon every countenance which the senior chief did not like, and his restless eyes wandered from face to face, and essayed to find if he had been betrayed. Gladwyn had been spared for the Indians, and all took their seats except Pashie, who stood up and asked Gladwyn why so many of the young men were in the street, and armed.

"Sung, I could not do less in receiving this great chief of many chiefs," replied Gladwyn, in a slightly sarcastic tone. The great chief placed at him in a distressed manner, and then pointed at a cedar screen which covered the council room at one end which waved to and fro at every passing breeze. After the formalities indispensable in such things as these, Pashie took a war-club in his hand and then, turning toward Gladwyn, whispered a sentence in the ear of Gladwyn.

"What does the Trader say so low that a great chief may not hear?" demanded Pashie, indignantly.

"He speaks in celebration of the great chief of the Ottawa," replied Gladwyn. "Let the chief speak."

The decisive moment was near at hand. The war-club which Pashie held was the weapon through which the first signal was to be given which should lead to death every Englishman in Detroit. The ally never commenced his speech by speaking of the long continued friendship between the Indians and their English brothers, and announced that they had been in search the gift of peace with the English.

"Come down to us," said Pashie, "as quick as you can, and I will give you the signal for the English to be saved."

This was the signal appointed.

They hurried down, and disclosed a short file hidden behind the fence!

Their muscles were stiffening for the leap when Gladwyn waved his hand. The roll of the drum and clash of steel succeeded; the caked curtain was drawn up, disclosing forty rangers, completely armed, glaring at the disappointed chiefs, with their long rifles ready. A single moment only the opposing bands stood glaring at each other, and then the unruffled Gladwyn waved his hand again, and the curtain dropped before the ambushed rangers.

"How is this, Pontiac?" cried Gladwyn. "Do you come to me with rifles instead of wampum?"

The chief made no reply, for his eagle eye was fixed upon the face of Edward Gresham, as he sat by the side of the major, and he cried to him in the Indian tongue:

"You did this."

"You are right, traitor. It was, and I am prouder of this act than any I have ever done. You are trapped, with arms in your hands, and what have you to expect?"

The only reply of the chief was to shake a threatening finger at the speaker, and then he turned to Gladwyn. The major now rose, and in no measured terms upbraided the chiefs for their premeditated treachery. He assured them that he would deal out ample vengeance against the tribes were the attempt renewed, and bade them begone at once.

Gladwyn is open to censure for this act, but he did it for the best. It was in his power to detain the party as hostages for the good conduct of their warriors, and perhaps if he had done so all might have been well and much blood had been spared. But he regarded it as one of the customary Indian outbreaks, easily suppressed, and did not do justice to the abilities of the chief who led them. Without another word, Pontiac gathered his men about him and departed, taking with him every Indian who had penetrated the fort.

There was little rest in Detroit that night. Early on the morning following, Rose St. Aubin, with the other French settlers, attended mass at their church. Returning she saw that the Indians were gathering in great numbers, and Pontiac advanced to the fort and demanded admittance. He was told by Gladwyn, who appeared upon the rampart, that he might enter if he chose, but that the great band he had brought with him must remain outside.

"We have come to smoke the calumet with our white brothers; all the warriors would drink in the friendship of the English."

"You alone can enter," replied Gladwyn.

The chief gave him a glance of defiance, and turning on his heel gave a signal which. At that sound the warriors rose as one man, with yells which curdled the blood of the listeners, and ran half frantic with passion through the village. Woe to the English who were so unfortunate as to be outside the fort in that terrible hour! Their doors were beaten in, one after another, and not one was left to tell the story. Pontiac's plans had been well laid, and with the single exception of Dear Sir, all the upper and lower forts fell into the net. And, but for the part which Edward Gresham had taken in this siege, this important post would have fallen also.

The white garrison, helpless, looked on and saw the victims dragged from their homes, impaled upon knife-points, scalped, and left to rot upon the earth, until buried by the French Canadians, most of whom had no part in this wild butchery. Luckily, but few English people lived without the walls, and these were cut off at once, while the terrified Canadians looked on, fearful of giving aid—only the brothers of the Circle of Vengeance viewing the bloody work with joyful eyes.

Pontiac took no part in the slaughter, neither did he make any effort to restrain his men other than giving them a stern command to beware that not a hair of a Frenchman's head was touched. While the work of destruction went on, he began moving the Indian camps from the eastern side of the river, and before many hours Detroit was in a state of siege. Gladwyn, looking down his reports, saw the misery lost by reason he was surprised, and while he maintained a bold front, he was not without fear that they would storm the work, and would by their force of numbers.

Several days later upon the ramparts when the fierce deeds were being done, three men stood up the wall to St. Anne's church. They flung open the door without ceremony, and two of them remained on side, while the third entered. Even at that moment, Edward recognized him as the strange chief who had appeared by Pontiac's side when he came upon his

treacherous errand, so ably foiled by Gladwyn. What did this man seek in the house of St. Aubin—a man known to be a general favorite among the Indians? Surely no harm was intended to Rose. The young man was frantic with fear, and only his strong sense of duty enabled him to keep from leaving the fort and hastening to the aid of the woman he loved so well. He saw the two Indians in front leave the door and go to the back of the house, but just then the voice of Gladwyn called him.

"I need your aid, Mr. Gresham. Do you think it possible that we are in any danger from these inside the walls?"

"It is possible that many of them need watching, sir. None of us will take much rest, if we save Detroit from these black-hearted fiends."

"Your eyes are better than mine, Mr. Gresham. Can you make out where these canoes are going?"

"They are after poor Fisher the sergeant, who lives on Isle au Cochon. I am afraid there is no hope for him."

"Oh that treacherous Pontiac! Would to God I had shot him down, when first his guilt was laid bare before me. Do you think Cuyler is in danger?"

"I do not doubt it. Your Indian is an able leader, and I shall be surprised if many of the outlying forts do not fall before his wiles. All of them can not be as lucky as we are, and you will excuse me if I say that the men of the 60th are not like the rangers, or even my men."

"Will Ketchikan be in time to warn Cuyler?"

"I fear not."

No more was said, and Gladwyn paced to and fro uneasily, looking down upon the savage host which hemmed them in on every side. Just then he was called to the water gate where a canoe had landed, containing two Frenchmen, who brought the sad news that two brave officers, Sir Robert Duncanson and Captain Richardson, had fallen into the hands of the St. Clair and Rock River, and that the Indians, with the help of a large portion of the Ojibway nation, had recently joined Pontiac.

As night came on Edward had a long interview with Gladwyn, and obtained leave to go out and scout through the camp of the Indians. Confident in his scout's ability, Gladwyn set

hesitated to let him go; but, permission being given, Edward went to his own house to prepare for his expedition. Half an hour after a stalwart savage, painted for war, stole through the streets toward the water gate, attended by Major Glatwyn.

The soldiers on duty were with difficulty restrained from killing him, so perfect was his disguise. At the water gate he found a canoe and pulled out into the darkness, warned by the Indian camp-fires not to approach too near. Once in the current, he made no attempt to work the paddle except to keep the head of the canoe straight, and floated down between the island and the camp. He heard the fiend-like yells, saw the wild figures leaping about the fires, and knew that the war-dance was commenced, and that he could not choose a better time to start. Pulling his canoe close to the bank, he stopped when he had hardly gone a dozen yards when he found himself in the midst of a strong party of savages, whom he knew to be Ojibwas, by their dress and paint.

"Who is this?" said the foremost man, laying a hand upon the handle of his knife. "Do you come to drink the blood of the English?"

"Yes," replied Graham. "My face is painted for war."

"Has my brother struck the war-post?" demanded the Indian. "Does he hate these white English dogs, and is he ready to put them to the knife?"

"I drink their blood like water," replied Graham. "They shall die like dogs."

Thinking that he had found a savage who was more blood-thirsty than himself, the Indian said no more, but moved by the side of the canoe toward the camp-fire. Luckily for him, there were few Wyandots or Ojibwas in this group, composed mostly of the Ojibwas, a wild tribe, who know but little of the white man, and listen to him intensely. Graham sat down in the circle and noticed every thing said, satisfying himself that the Indians designed to make an attack upon the fort at early morning.

Soon after, he managed to detach himself from the group, and pulled on until he reached the center of the town, which was alive with Indians, moving restlessly to and fro, eager for the morning. But few Frenchmen were in the street,

and among these he recognized Entienne Barbier, who was talking earnestly with Pontiac by a fire.

"Aha, my lad," thought Gresham. "You are in this, it seems."

Nothing but the most complete impudence could have sustained Edward Gresham in the scenes through which he was forced to pass. He saw here and there the body of one of the English residents, lying in a ghastly heap, scalped and gory. Some of the houses were in ruins, and even the residences of the French were closely shut, for they did not like their red friends any too well.

Edward walked coolly up and down, and at last approached the fire, near which Pontiac and the Frenchman stood, and edging close to them heard enough of their conversation to convince him that Barbier was a traitor, and had urged on the Indians to this outbreak. His fingers itched to be at the traitor's throat, and perhaps something in his attitude showed it, for Pontiac, turning his head, saw him, and making a signal to the Frenchman to remain where he was, he quietly approached the disguised scout and laid his hand upon his naked arm.

"What tribe, my brother?" he said, in a questioning tone.

"Ojibway," replied Edward, imitating the uncouth dialect of the tribe he intended to represent. He had taken the precaution, upon leaving the fort, to wear the moccasins of that tribe, with their totem worked in beads upon the top.

"My brother has a brave look," said Pontiac, "and it is strange that so great a warrior should not sit in the councils of his nation. Let him come with me to the camp of the Ojibways, and his chief shall speak for him. Pontiac must be certain that he has no traitors in his camp."

"It is well," replied Edward, but it was far from well in his opinion. He began to fear that he had got himself into a trap, and quickly revolved in his mind some way of escape. Pontiac waited quietly until Edward signed to him to lead the way, and then followed him through the street. Once out of the circle of the camp fire he took a quick step, a rapid blow was struck, and Pontiac lay senseless on the earth, while, keeping over his body, Edward Gresham ran for his life.

CHAPTER X.

WILD MADGE'S DAGGER.

PONTIAC bounded to his feet, fierce and raging, and his terrible war-cry rung out with startling distinctness, warning the braves to be on the alert and calling several of his own band to his side. A few hurried words sent them scampering through the village, in hot pursuit of the man who had dared to insult their great chief, while he joined in the chase, wild with anger, his fiery eyes half-starting from his head.

Edward heard them on all sides of him, challenging every passing Indian, and he feared that he was in the toils, but the brave man did not despair. He leaped over the fence which led to the house of St. Aubin, and hurried up to the door, while the clamor of the pursuing Indians grew fiercer all about him. There was no time to hesitate, and throwing open the door, he ran in, closing it behind him. As he did so, he was conscious that the room was dimly lighted, and seated close to the hearth, behind a mantle and fast, was St. Aubin, moodily looking into the flames. He cast a hurried glance at the intruder, and then a look of sudden rage crossed his face.

"You shall suffer for this, dogs of Indians," he cried, fiercely. "Wait until Pontiac knows how I have been treated. Give me back my daughter, you red fiend; give her back to me."

"Rose?" cried Edward. "Oh, my God! do not tell me that she is lost!"

"Who are you?" cried the trader. "Edward Gresham, and in this disguise?"

"No other: speak to me, tell me what you mean by saying that you have lost Rose."

"Oh, my darling, my beautiful flower! Better have her dead than in the hands of this murderous band. This afternoon, when the attack was made, three Indians rushed in upon us, bound and gagged me, and carried her away toward the

river. The leader was the chief who walked by the side of Pontiac when they made their treacherous visit to the fort."

"Which way did they go?"

"Through the back door and out by the orchard gates. Edward Gresham, as you love my daughter save her from these treacherous hounds."

Edward cut the cords which bound the trader to the chair, and just then the clamor grew fierce about the house.

"What is this?" said the trader.

"I am pursued by the Indians. Hide me, if you value the life of your daughter."

"This way," replied St. Aubin, leading the way into the cellar. "I will save you."

He caught up a burning brand to light the way and descended rapidly. St. Aubin detached a stone or two from the rough wall of the cellar and showed a wide cavity behind, capable of hiding half a dozen persons.

"That was built to guard against Indian surprises of this kind," he said. "You will go in, and remain quiet until I call for you."

He replaced the stone and hurried back into the kitchen, for the savages were already clamoring at the door, and just as he closed the cellar they were thrown open, and Pontiac strode in, his face illuminated by the fires of passion, while fierce faces appeared at the doorways.

"Where is the dog who dared insult the great Pontiac?" he cried, angrily.

"What do you mean, chief?" replied St. Aubin. "If you seek my life, take it, for it is in your hands."

"No," replied Pontiac. "I do not seek your life. I am the same French Pontiac who fought for Frenchman in the old wars when the Ojibways and Kioways would have destroyed them. But, a man insulted Pontiac and struck him to the earth, and I have tracked him here."

"How should I know any thing of this, Pontiac?" replied St. Aubin. "I have enough sorrow now to notice every Indian who runs yelping through the street."

"Are my brother's doors open? Perhaps he ran in here, and is hidden."

"Then let Pontiac search for him," said St. Aubin. "Bid your warriors stand at the doors, to see that he does not run out, and I will lead you."

Pontiac bowed his head, and at a low, guttural order from him the braves drew back, and, lighting a lamp, St. Aubin led the way into the cellar. He went down with as great a clatter as possible, and Elward, taking the hint, lay quiet, scarcely breathing for fear the keen sense of hearing of the Indian might detect him. The chief cast a searching glance about the room, satisfied himself that the man he sought was not there, and St. Aubin led the way to the upper part of the house. They searched with like success, of course, and the face of Pontiac began to take on a crestfallen look.

"My brother was right," he said. "The man who insulted Pontiac is not here, but he shall be found, if he hides in the lowest depths of the earth. Where is Bright Star, whom the Indians love?"

"You have made loud professions of regard for me, Pontiac, and now I want you to make them good. This very day some of your men have stolen my daughter and carried her away."

"My brother can not lie, and yet is it possible that Pontiac's men have done this? Give me their names, and I will punish them."

"I do not know their names, but the leader was the chief who walked by your side when you went to the fort."

Pontiac gave utterance to an angry exclamation, and his fingers fiercely clenched the handle of his hatchet.

"Do you tell me that this man has dared to do this?"

"He has."

"Then I tell you that she shall be restored to you, or he shall die. Pontiac does not lie when he says that his heart is warm toward the good trader and Bright Star. Tell me about it."

St. Aubin told the whole story, and was interrupted now and then by a fierce exclamation from the chief. When the trader had finished, Pontiac repeated his promise to save Rose, and strode hastily away.

"Where is the Red Lightning now?" he cried, addressing one of the men. The fellow could not tell, but just then a

hasty step was heard, and the chief who had entered Detroit by his side, and was accused of stealing Rose away, strode hastily up, looking dust-worn and weary, but with a certain light of elation in his eyes.

"I have brought good news, sachem," he said. "Runners have met me who have made my heart glad."

"Come with me," replied Pontiac.

The chief followed him without a word, and they reached a secluded spot beside the river.

"What is your news?" demanded Pontiac, speaking in French, to which the other replied in the same language.

"It could not be better. Michilimackinac has fallen, and before this Presque Isle is in our hands."

"Good," said Pontiac. "And now hear me speak. When we went out upon the war-path together, I told you that I could not strike against Frenchmen. Is it not so?"

"Of course; that was the agreement."

"Every English dog was doomed, but not a hair of a French head was to fall."

"That is true."

"Then what mean you, Red Lightning?—how did you dare to strike at the good trader and the Bright Star?"

Red Lightning started and looked fixedly at Pontiac.

"What have I to do with this?"

"Do not come to Pontiac with a forked tongue, Red Lightning. You came to the house of the good trader; you tied him like a dog, and stopped his mouth. The good trader is my friend, and his child is my friend, and I have said that no harm shall come to them. Where is the Bright Star?"

"Pontiac, it is nothing to you. The Bright Star is in my hands, and I will keep her."

"Ha!"

"I joined you to avenge myself upon the English, who have done me wrong, but I made no promise to give up my own private revenges; neither will I."

"Do you dare oppose yourself to Pontiac? Look upon you and consider well, Red Lightning. At a word from me, the fire of death will sweep through the village and none shall be spared, not one."

"You dare not do that."

"No, Pontiac dare not do wrong. He hates the English, and has struck at them, for they are his enemies, but he still loves his friends. Give back the Bright Star to her father."

"I will not do it."

"Then you make an enemy of Pontiac, for I have promised that I would give her."

"Who told you that I took her away?"

"The good trader."

"A thousand curses on his head! Look you, chief; we have no right to quarrel, for we have embarked together in the great cause of sweeping these English dogs from the land. I will do no wrong to the Bright Star, as you call Rose St. Arden, for I will make her my true wife as soon as I can find a priest to do the work."

"Does my brother speak the truth?"

"Upon my honor. Leave the girl with me, and let us not quarrel until our work is done in Detroit. The least thing will overthrow our plans, and we can not afford to be at variance. I give you my word not to do her a wrong, but only to keep her safely until Detroit shall fall."

"Give her to me to keep."

"I will not do that, chief. I want her near me while the fight goes on, to win her to my plans, and I can not give her up."

"What if I call my warriors and take you? The Indians have many ways to drag the secrets from an evil heart."

"You can not frighten me, Pontiac. I swear to you that I will not give up the secret of her hiding place, even to you."

"Let it be as you say," said Pontiac, sullenly. "Keep the Bright Star safe, and do her no harm, for as surely as you do, I will kill you with my hand."

"You give my promise," replied the other. "I—"

"Have you seen my Willie anywhere?" said a clear, sweet voice. "I am looking for him everywhere, and can not find him."

Both turned quickly, and by the light of the moon rising high in the heaven, saw the unfortunate victim of man's crime, Marie Sinclair, standing close to them and looking fixedly upon them. She was better dressed than when we saw her

last, for the kind-hearted Rose had taken from her own wardrobe to dress her. The dark, fathomless eyes showed no fear, and Pontiac, who knew her well and the cause of her affliction, looked sadly and pityingly upon her, although one of the accursed race.

"The woman of the woods has a sad life," he said. "Let me go to the shelter of a lodge, lest some one who does not know her should do her a wrong."

"Off!" shouted Red Lightning, looking wildly at her. "Do not turn your accusing eyes upon me, for I can not bear them."

Midge turned upon him with the quickness of a panther, her eyes flashing fire.

"You, *you!* ha! ha! ha! Have I found you at last under a red skin? Your hands were redder once!"

"Take her away or I shall do her a mischief," said Red Lightning, hoarsely, making frantic signals. "The eyes of the witch burn into my very soul."

"Tell me where to find my Willie. No one knows better than you."

"I can not."

"Will you die with a lie in your mouth? You know where he is, and must give him up to me."

She advanced upon him with that wild look in her eyes, and he retreated step by step, with his fascinated eyes fixed upon her face, the face of the injured wife of Willie Sinclair.

"All the fiends of the pit could not fright me half so much. Pontiac, come between us, or I shall strike her."

"Off no hand against the Woman of the Woods, for the Medicine Man laid his hand heavily upon her. Let Pontiac lead you to a lodge where you will be safe."

"No, no, no! How shall I ever find Willie if he escapes? Tell me where he is, and at once!"

Pontiac laid his hand upon her arm, but she shook him off angrily.

"Tell me quickly!"

"I know nothing of your husband, witch! Oh, Heaven! was it for this creature that I lost my soul?"

"Show me where he is!"

"I tell you I shall strike her, Pontiac," cried Red Lightning, still retreating, "if you do not take her away."

"Come, poor child; an Indian never wrongs one who talks to the spirits of the rocks and trees."

She shook off his hand again, and advanced hastily.

"Tell me!"

Red Lightning struck at her with his clenched hand, but in an instant, the dagger with which Willie Sinclair's life was taken flashed in the air. She struck full and true at his unguarded breast. What could save him now?

CHAPTER XI.

THE WOOD CAMP.

We left Edward Gresham lying hidden in the depths of the cellar waiting for the Indians to leave the house. Half an hour passed; then St. Aubin came down, removed the stones and set him at liberty, telling him the promise of the chief.

"Then you can depend upon his word," said Edward. "I know Pontiac and something of his plans and they do not include evil against the French. It is only we who have the blood of old England in our veins who have any thing to fear from him. I must get back to the fort, for nothing can be done to-night. Look out and tell me whether any Indians are lurking near."

St. Aubin popped out civilly and announced the coast clear, and after reiterating his promise to save Rose at any hazard, the young man pushed open the door and went out, turning at once toward the river. In the present state of the camp it was impossible to pass through it, and he preferred to take his chance of finding a canoe and by that means reaching the water side. He found a canoe readily, reached the gate, and was admitted, when he at once went to the major and made his report, also announcing the capture of Rose St. Aubin.

"Take courage, my brave fellow," said Gladwyn. "Fiends as they are, I hardly think they dare make enemies of the French settlers by doing her an injury, as she is such a favorite everywhere. Pontiac, after giving his promise would not permit it to be done."

"You are right, no doubt," said Edward sadly; "and yet, it drives me almost mad to think how utterly helpless I am to aid the woman I love."

"I know it, my dear lad, but bear it like a man. And now, good-night, for I must to the ramparts, to make ready for the assault."

Edward went slowly and sadly to his house, and unlocked the front door, turning the key upon the inside as he closed it again. He passed through into the kitchen, tried the lock of the door to see that it was fast, and turned to a cupboard to find a light, when a blanket was thrown suddenly over his head, hampering his arms and muffling his face so that it was impossible to make an outcry.

"Silence," hissed a voice close to his ear, "or I will drive a knife into your heart. Find a light, number three."

The lamp was found and lighted, and then the ruffians who had seized him turned him over and tied his hands and feet securely, while another thrust a gag into his mouth.

"We have him fast," said one of the three. "Brothers, it seems foolish to waste time and risk danger by taking this man outside, but the orders of the Grand Commander must be obeyed."

Edward signified a desire to speak, but he was sternly ordered to keep quiet. He saw at a glance that he was in the hands of the dread brotherhood known as the Circle of Vengeance. What reason they had to hate him he did not yet know, but, that they *did* hate him there could be no doubt. These men were all masked and dressed in black clothing, so much alike that nothing could be told concerning their figures.

"You have defied the Circle of Vengeance," said the one who appeared to be the leader, in excellent French, "and you may see the result. You were warned but you would not listen to the call of reason, and for your stubborn conduct you are to die."

Edward could make no answer, but he looked intently at the speaker, as he stood above him.

"It would doubtless be a pleasure to you to know how you were taken. We will inform you that we took out a window sash and got in, and replaced the sash after it. We have had to wait some time, but the time passed pleasantly, as you keep good wine in your cupboard."

The man appeared to like the sound of his own voice, for he went on, regardless of the fact that his prisoner could not answer him.

"You did a bad thing when you forced us to justify our erring brother, the other night. He was a faithful member until you led him astray."

"Hush," said another of the men; "how long do you intend to stand there and preach? Let us get to work."

"You appear to think you are leader here, Antoine."

"Take care; Number Three!"

"Hush! Unlock the door and let us get away, for, as we intend to justify him, it makes no difference if he does know us."

Edward Graham did know them. A man who had been taught to make use of every clue, to remember every thing, would not long be at a loss in placing the talkative Frenchman, and he knew that this was Claude Benoit, a comrade of Henriette Daulton. The men hurriedly enveloped the victim in a blanket, and passed through the kitchen door, when one of them went ahead to see that all was right. His report was favorable, and they hurried on to the next house, which they entered just before the guard relief passed on its way to the different posts. They carried the bound man into the cellar, and laid him down, thus folding him completely, while he heard the creaking of a door upon its hinges and he was again lifted and carried through a damp passage for some distance. Then he was carried up some steps, and came into the open air, and the ripple of running water convinced him that he was near the river.

"Put him into the canoe," whispered Charlie. "Get in, you two; I'll take the paddle."

He was laid in a canoe, and was soon gliding rapidly along the stream—how far he could not tell, but he knew that they

had some way of getting out of the fort unknown to him. For an hour the canoe glided swiftly on, and then he felt the prow grate upon the sand, and Claude gave a signal whistle. It was answered at once, and a number of men joined them upon the bank.

"Have you trapped the fox?"

"Of course; my plan could not fail."

"*Eh bien!* You have a wonderful opinion of yourself, Monsieur le Babbler. Never mind, we have him at last, and that is enough for us. Are you going back at once?"

"We must; if it was known that we had left the fort we might be suspected, you know."

"*Bon soir*, then; take care of yourselves."

Edward heard the canoe push off, and then the bonds upon his feet were cut, and he was hurried along over a rough forest path for over half an hour. At the end of that time he was conscious that merry voices were ringing out ahead, and, directly after, his hands were unloosed, and the bandage taken from his eyes. A strange sight greeted his astonished gaze.

He was in an irregular opening in the forest, completely hemmed in by forest trees. About thirty men were in the enclosed space, seated about their fires, drinking, playing at cards and singing songs. They were all dressed in the black uniform of the Circle of Vengeance, and closely masked, and the keen eyes of the Trailer roved from side to side, trying to make out who among his masked enemies he could recognize. A great shout greeted his appearance; cards and dice were thrown aside, and all stood up to look at him.

"Whom have we now?" cried a loud voice.

"One of the doomed," replied the man who led Edward.

"Has he been warned?"

"He has been warned thrice."

"Would he not heed the warning?"

"He has defied the Great Brotherhood."

"It is well; his name is written in red. Brethren, form the mystic circle."

The men linked their hands together, and began to circle slowly about the immovable figure of the prisoner, who sat coolly down upon a log and looked at them with a quiet smile.

Suddenly the circle parted, and the figure of the Grand Commandant appeared, facing the prisoner.

"What immaturity is this?" demanded Edward. "My dear fellows, a man who has stood at the stake while a village of Wyandottas danced about him, is not likely to be frightened by black looks and black clothes."

"Silence, scoundrel!" cried the Grand Commandant. "When you defy the Great Brotherhood, you know not what you do."

"Bah! What do I care for your formulas? If you mean to do any thing with me, set about it as quickly as you can, and the quicker you do it the better I shall like it."

"You will not think so when the Brotherhood begin the torture. An Indian band can give pain to the body, but we can do better than that. We can make you feel the tortures of the damned in body and mind. And, to begin; bring in the other!"

There was a movement in the circle and a party appeared, leading in their midst Rose St. Aubin, very pale, but unalterably-fixed in purpose.

"Rose, my poor girl, my pale darling," moaned Edward, "are you here?"

"Oh, Edward, have you, too, fallen into the hands of these villains?"

"Good words, mistress, if you please," said the Grand Commandant. "I am not a man to hear insult offered to the Brotherhood. Look upon her, Edward Gresham. You are young, and life is very pleasant, and you have laid out for yourself a future in which this girl forms a part. I love her better than you do, but there are certain conditions upon which I will give her up to you."

"You mock me, sir. If you love her as you say, there are no conditions under which you would give her up."

"There are."

"Name them."

"You are in the confidence of the English major, Gladwyn?"

"I am proud to say that I am, and to have earned his good opinion is something to be proud of, for he is a noble man."

"Very well; you have great influence with the scouts, voyageurs and trappers in Detroit?"

"I have."

"Without them, Glahwyn could not sustain a combined assault for an hour?"

"I do not say whether he could or not, but we will admit the supposition."

"I earnestly desire that Detroit shall speedily fall, and have been working for this object since the English occupancy. Let me ask you another question. Are these scouts, etc., favorable to the English?"

"If you had come into the fort when Pontiac made his treacherous visit, you would not have asked the question."

"But there are many in Detroit who do not love the English."

"Perhaps; I do not know. But all this is useless; I do not intend to give you the information you desire."

"Perhaps I can make it worth your while, sir."

The eyes of Gresham began to blaze, but he said nothing.

"I have said that there are conditions by which you can not only be free in an hour's time, but Rose St. Aubin shall also be set at liberty. I love her dearly, and would not give up her love for any other price, but the strength and glory of France is more to me than the love of any woman can ever be. Think before you refuse my offer, and by it doom her to a fate which would make the stoutest man tremble."

"Let her go away, wretch. Why do you keep her here to torture her? We can talk without having her standing by."

"I would rather stay, dear Edward," said Rose.

"Go on, sir," said Edward.

"This is my plan. You will return to the fort and at once begin your work among the hunters and scouts, to win them over to our side. Say to them that the service of the king of France pays better than that of England, and we will do any thing for them when the post is again in our hands."

"Go on."

"When you have won them over, signal the fact from the walls of the fort by walking upon the eastern battlement with

a white handkerchief tied upon your hat. Do this, and not only shall Rose be yours, but you shall have a captain's commission in the French service."

"Any thing more?"

"When you are ready, give us the signal, and wait until we answer it. Then at night open the sally-port, and we shall be ready to enter, and then woe to Detroit."

"Is that all?"

"Yes; your answer."

The young scout spring to his feet, and dealt the tempter such a blow that he rolled in the dust at his feet, the blood streaming from mouth and nostrils under the heavy stroke.

"Take that for offering an unprovoked insult to an Englishman born, you vile renegade!" he shouted.

Rose uttered a faint cry of alarm, although she could not but exult in the gallant conduct of her lover, who, by that blow delivered in the midst of enemies, proved himself a gallant man, and true to his country and flag. The Grand Commandant lay stunned and dizzy upon the earth, while a dozen of his men ran to raise him, and a threatening crowd surrounded Edward. Seizing a heavy half-consumed brand from the camp fire, he flung himself desperately upon them. Right and left they went down under his crushing strokes; then, stopping suddenly, he caught a loaded pistol from the man he had knocked down first, and grasping the Grand Commandant by the collar, dragged him to his feet, with the pistol at his ear.

"Move a step, stir a finger, and you are dead!" he hissed.

"Back, all of you, and do not dare to lift a weapon, for, as surely as you do, the man I hold is dead. Rose, come to my side; I will protect you, and they dare not fire!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEATH-ARROW.

THE disappearance of Edward Gresham from Detroit was only known when, at four o'clock, one of his sergeants came to call him to the wall, in anticipation of the attack of the Indians. They found the house open, the room in disorder, and the evidences of a struggle everywhere apparent. Knowing him so well, Major Gladwyn was certain that some calamity had befallen him. The two previous assaults upon him was proof that he was the object of hate on the part of the terrible band known as the Circle of Vengeance, whatever that might be.

Gladwyn had been upon the walls all night, and as the first gray light of the morning began to show itself, he could see the dusky figures of the warriors moving about in the gloom, preparing for the work. The men came silently to their quarters without beat of drum, for they knew that on the first struggle their fate depended.

The cannon were in position, loaded to the muzzle, some with grape and canister, and others with balls, scraps of iron and the like. No man knew better than Gladwyn the wholesome dread which the savages have of the "big gun."

Suddenly, as all Indian attacks do, the assault was commenced. A furious yell announced the onset, and the bullets began to patter like rain against the stockade, while the women and children sought safety in cellars from the falling storm. The veterans and hunters gave back an answering shout, not less loud and fierce than that of the assailants as they sprung to the help of the beleaguered. The Indians were all about them, firing rapidly, some killed by the men and bow rifles, some dancing wildly about, keeping in continual motion to baffie the aim of the hunters. But, the deadly rifles of the bordermen had been used to strike the back upon the leap, and many a savage went down.

Gladwyn trained his guns where the Indians appeared thick-

est, and the grape and canister went searching through the thickets, driving the painted demons from place to place. But, in spite of this, they returned to the assault, and woe to the man who dared show his head above the ramparts, for he was made the mark for a score of bullets. Every loophole was watched. The glitter of a button, or the cold gleam of steel, brought the hissing balls about the person of the bearer, but no assault was made. Pontiac, knowing the temper of his men, dared not order them to make a regular assault upon the fortifications. His plan was rather to harass the enemy, by a long-continued siege, to cut off their supplies, to overthrow in detail every force sent to their aid, and ultimately to force them to surrender.

Where was Madge Sinclair?

We left her with her hand suspended over the breast of Red Lightning, the destroyer of her husband, for it is no part of our plan to conceal the fact that the intuition of the mad woman was right. She struck, and the blade pierced a little way into the clothing of the chief, and shivered into fragments upon a steel corset underneath. The man laughed fiercely, and raised his hand to strike her down, but Pontiac again interposed.

"Go your ways, Red Lightning, and I ask nothing from Pontiac. But, hear this well in mine; if a wrong is done to the Bright Star I will seek you out and kill you; so!"

Red Lightning only replied by a derisive gesture, and turned away, leaving the chief and Madge together. But, all the chief's powers of persuasion would not prevail upon her to stay; she broke away from him and pursued the footsteps of the infuriated chief. She saw him take a canoe and cross the stream, and, with the cunning of the crazed brain she took another and followed him.

Red Lightning looked at last, and still she followed, creeping on with cautious tread.

Through the trackless forest, thinking only of her quest, she passed her anxious course, and not an Indian on the war-trail could have vi'd with her in lightness of tread. At last the camp fires of the Circle of Vengeance gleamed before her. Lying prostrate among the leaves, she watched, until she saw

Rose St. Aubin sitting by a fire, in tears, listening to the muttered speech of Red Lightning, who was seated by her side, evidently against her will.

Still the matwoman kept her place. Her impulse was to advance, and demand from her wronger the secret she sought, but she kept it down, and remained silent, watching.

Edward Gresham was brought into the camp, amid the murmuring of the circle, and she could hardly restrain a cry of delight when the Grand Commandant went down under the stalwart arm of the Trailer.

She saw him, strong and tall, in his young manhood standing alone, opposed to thirty enemies, and with superhuman valor hold them all at bay. The fray terrified her, and yet it had a wonderful interest. She held her breath as the club whirled in air and alighted upon the heads of the brethren. A moment after she saw him stand upright, a pistol in his hand, and the chief trembling at his side.

Would he slay him, and with him the secret she sought? The matwoman at once flung off all disguise, and was about to throw herself into the circle, when she saw the Grand Commandant slip suddenly under the arm of his enemy, grasping his wrist, and holding it high above his head. Before Edward could wrench his hand free, a score of his enemies were upon him, and he was thrown to the earth, while the Frenchmen struck and maddened him, helpless as he was.

"Hands off!" roared the Commandant. "Death, men, would you kill him before I have my revenge?"

"Oh cowards cowards!" cried Rose. "Twenty against one man! I am ashamed to think that you are my countrymen."

The men dropped the now insensible form of Edward to the earth, and Rose ran forward and raised his bleeding head upon her knee, while the masked leader looked on coldly.

"He brought it on himself, my lady," he said. "How dare I strike a man like me? Yet I would not have him slain at present. Prune, bring me a gourdful of water, and you, dogs that you are, stand back! If you have killed him, you shall suffer for it, I swear to you!"

The man brought the water and the rest slunk away.

while Rose took the gourd and began to wash the blood from her lover's face. He was badly cut, and stunned by the blows he had received, but the cool splashing of that soft hand revived him, and his eyes opened, although he was still too faint and giddy to rise.

"I tried to save you, my darling," he whispered, "but they were too many for me."

"Hush," she said. "Do not speak, as you value your life."

"What are you saying?" demanded the Frenchman. "No lives passages between you two or I shall finish the work my friends have begun. Are you better, you dog?"

Edward made no answer, save by a look, but the scoundrel understood him and bit his lips until the blood came.

"You defy me, then?"

"Yes; I have little more to expect at your hands, and I scorn you. I am in your power, and you can kill me if you will, but you are a coward—*look!* do you understand?"

"I will leave your life for that word. Come away from him, Rose, or by this light I will drag you away. Rise, I say, leave him!"

"It will be better, Rose," said Edward, sadly. "I can do no more, and we must bear this sorrow as well as we can. But, remember, whether I live or die, that I am true to you, my love."

"And I will never be false," cried Rose. "Here, on my knees before you, I promise never to marry any man save you. And if you are slain, I will die as your unwedded bride."

With a frenzied cry, the ruffian seized her by the wrist and dragged her to her feet. She caught up the pistol which Edward had dropped and would have used it, but he twisted her arm until she was forced to drop it from sheer pain.

"Uselessly wounded?" roared the Trader. "Why do I lie useless here?"

These struggles desperately, but he called two of his men and put her in their charge, and she was carried away calling vainly for help. By the Frenchman's orders, they laid the unfortunate man upon the earth, with a rope upon each side and wrist, and drew the cords so tight that every muscle

was strained. He was then fastened to a tree. The position was maddening, but the torture of his body was nothing to the agony of his soul. He lay silent, his eyes blazing with fury, but his tongue was dumb.

The weary night passed at length, and the bound man was released long enough to eat a little, and then was tied down again. Rose came out of the bush hut in which she had passed the night, and would have released him, but one of the men dragged her away.

"No, no, my lady ; that is against my orders."

"Take your hands from me, instantly. Are you men or fiends, that you can not see that he will die if he is not released."

"Your own liberty will be taken away if you attempt it again, madam," said the chief, angrily coming forward.

"You need not torture him. Set a guard over him but do not confine him in that dreadful way."

"I will try another plan, then," replied Red Lightning. "Here, men ; place the prisoner in a sitting position against the tree. You, Pierre Ernest, and Javert, will remain and guard him. The rest will dress for the attack."

The men hurried away and in a short time appeared again, in the dress and paint of Indians, to all outward appearance Wyandots. Red Lightning also had donned his Indian costume, and leaving one more man as a guard for Rose, they marched away. All that long morning they heard the boom of cannon, the rattle of musketry, and the clear ring of the rifles, and knew that the assault upon Detroit had commenced. This continued for hours, and then a dropping fire succeeded, principally from rifles, and Edward knew that the Indians had been repulsed.

Rose heard the firing, but not daring to approach her lover she remained in suspense. The irregular fire continued throughout the day. Toward evening the excited Rose was sitting upon a little hillock, out of sight of the rest, pleading with the man who guarded her to set her free.

"No !" he said, impatiently. "What do you take me for ?"

"Are we not both French, sir, children of the same great people ?"

"But you are false to the French; you care only for the English. Bah! I hate all who uphold these beef-eaters."

"We have eaten their salt," said Rose, "and ought to be their friends."

"Bah, I tell you! If the English had one throat, and my knife was in my hand, how quickly would I drink their blood. I would slay—"

The murderous words died upon his lips, and life and sense went with them. Rose saw, to her utter horror, that an arrow had pierced him to the heart! Then an Indian, with his finger on his lips enjoining silence, came forward, like a shadow, to show himself, and then as suddenly disappeared.

It was Ketadin, the Delaware.

CHAPTER XIII.

AVENGED! AVENGED!

THE scream which rose to Rose's lips was hushed, as she staggered back from the bloody corpse of the slain man. A moment after there came from the thicket the cry of the wild turkey, a bird which the French hunters regarded as the most delicate of dishes. Two of the guards rose, and, seizing their guns, leaving a single man in charge of Edward, hurried away in pursuit of the game. Rose heard the gobble of the turkey repeated again and again, as it receded, growing fainter, until it died away in the distance. Ten minutes after a distant cry was heard, and she knew that either the Frenchman had fallen or the Indian had sealed his devotion with his life, but she rose and walked rapidly toward the guard, and entered into conversation with him, to call his attention from the woods from which she expected to see Ketadin appear. But, the moments passed, and the Indian did not come.

Without warning, gliding like a shadow, Ketadin stole through the leafy cover. Where were the brothers of the Circle of Vengeance? Dead in the forest, each with an ar-

row through his heart. The eye of the chief had not failed him in the time when it was needed, and the men had done their last deed of violence. Let none pity them; their lives had been as wicked as their doom was sudden and sure.

He reached the circle of the glade, and peeping through the underbrush, saw Edward lying bound to the tree, and Rose standing so close to the guard that he dared not loose the shaft, and he waited his chance. Soon after, Rose moved a little, leaving the side of the fellow exposed, and the deadly arrow hissed through the air, and the last guard lay bleeding on the earth. Ketadin ran in, cutting the bonds which bound the young man to the tree.

"Ketadin, friend of the white man!" cried Edward, as he clasped his strong hand. "I might have known that you would not forsake me, but I thought you far away."

"Ketadin was not blind to the danger which hung over his white brother and the Bright Star, and he has come to help them. Let us go."

He had hardly spoken, when from all sides a vengeful cry, and the painted forms of the brothers of the Circle of Vengeance poured in upon them. Ketadin, fighting like a hero was borne down by numbers, and laid bleeding and senseless on the sod. Edward, still weak from his recent wounds, although struggling manfully, was soon overpowered, and Rose was held fast in the grip of Red Lightning.

"It is lucky, after all, that the cowardly Wyandots refused to assail the works," said Red Lightning. "Do you know that Indian?"

"It is Ketadin, the Delaware," replied one of the men. "I know the dog well."

"I have heard of him. Death and destruction! Is Pierre dead?"

"He has a long arrow between his ribs, Commandant," replied the man.

"And where are the rest?"

"We can see them nowhere."

"Search for them, and if they are dead find the bodies and bring them in at once."

The men scattered through the woods and in half an hour came back, bringing with them the lifeless bodies of the three

men who had fallen by Ketadin's hand. A fierce snarl ran through the circle, and they looked savagely at the prostrate figure of the Indian.

"This must end, men," said Red Lightning. "Take up that murderous Indian and keep him safe until he recovers, for he must have his senses when he dies. See to the Trailer as well, for I am determined that he shall share his friend's fate."

"What do you mean to do?" cried Rose. "If Ketalin killed your men he did it in fight."

"Silence; the men were most foully murdered, and the murderer is doomed to death."

The silent band obeyed the orders of their superior. The Indian was carried away and securely bound, and the same was done with Elward. Then they dug a wide grave in the center of the valley, in which to bury the men who had fallen, while the dark band, with their black robes thrown hastily over their Indian dress, marched about the grave, chanting a **rude funeral dirge.**

One of the black-robed brothers then advanced and said the services of the Roman Catholic church above the dead, and then the earth hid them forever. Rose looked at the priest in wonder, for she did not know that there was one of that class connected with the band. She knew that the order of the Jesuits had long arms, and that they had done more than any others to build up colonies in this far land, but she was also aware that they had endeavored to dissuade the French from giving the Indians assistance, and had been, in a great measure, successful. Who then was the priest who **said mass for the dead?**

When all was done, Red Lightning gave Rose in charge of one of the men, and was gone for some moments, accompanied by the priest. When they came back the priest unmasked, revealing the curly hair of Father Butler.

"I might have known you were concerned in this," she said. "I am not surprised to see you in the midst of blood and violence, but how dare you so profane the rites of our Holy Church, Murderer Butler?"

"I have not profaned them, my daughter," replied the other. "I am Father Josephus, a member of the Order of

Jesuits, and here at the command of my superiors. I am here to persuade you to keep your promise to this young man who has fought nobly in defense of his country. He has done evil at times, it is true, but I have absolved him, and I know that he loves you."

"That man! Father, if you are indeed a priest, dare you counsel a pure woman to unite herself for life to such a scoundrel?"

"I dare; you must be his wife."

"That is the word; you *must*," replied the Commandant. "I have sworn to make you my wife before the sun goes down."

"Murderer, do not touch me. Father Josephus, I appeal to you for aid against this man!"

"You appeal in vain. The fates have ordered that you shall be his wife," said the Jesuit.

"You are perjured, priest. Remember your vows before God. Help, help, if there is a man in all this band! You that are Frenchmen listen to me. My father has lived long in Detroit; here my mother died, and lies buried; here the best years of my life were spent, and I never knowingly did one of you a wrong. My father has befriended many of you doubtless, and will you stand idly by and see me made the wife of this base man against my will?"

There was a movement among the brothers, and weapons were half drawn, when Barbier turned upon them.

"Brethren, you are half persuaded to give this foolish woman aid, but think a moment. Her father's name is written in red, and her lover's as well. Dare you forget your oaths, and so peril the cause?"

Every hand dropped at once, although they murmured still.

"Bring out the prisoners!" cried the Grand Commandant.

Several men started to obey, and the Indian and Edward were dragged into the circle. Both were suffering from their injuries, and yet wore a high, exalted look, as they looked death defiantly in the face.

"You are called to witness my marriage, Edward Gresham. Look at me well, for I am that man whom you have hounded

from place to place, hunted like the beast of the forest, and who now claims his revenge at your hands—Gaston Delisle, the outlaw!"

"Ha; I suspected this! If I had known it sooner I would have killed you at the head of your men, long ago."

"You did not know it, and if you had, I have such faith in myself as to believe that I am not so ready to be killed. You shall see me united to Rose St. Aubin in the tie which nothing but death can sever, and then die."

"You will not force her to marry you against her will? What priest is so base as to do the work?"

"Base or not, I am the man," said Etienne Barbier, showing his face.

"You a priest; you?"

"Yes; the order of Jesus has long arms, and I am one of the fingers."

Edward made a bound, threw aside his enemies, and seized Gaston Delisle by the throat. The outlaw put up his hand, covered by a glove, and, as the two struggled, the glove was torn off, revealing the scarred stump of the fore finger, which had been cut off!

"It was you who sought to murder me, Gaston Delisle! I see my work upon your hand."

Strong men forced them asunder, and, amid the cries for mercy from the poor girl, Rose was dragged to the side of her outlaw lover, and the ceremony began. What did they care whether she answered yes or no, but she had no choice? There stood Edward, strongly held by four stout men, while a mob held a cocked pistol at his head.

"If she says no," cried Delisle, "shoot him on the spot!"

"Never then, Rose!" cried Edward. "He will kill me after it; you can not save my life."

"I can not give you to death, Edward," moaned Rose. "What shall I do?"

"Let me pass!" shrieked a well known voice, and Marie St. Aubin, breathless with running, parted the crowd and reached the side of Edward.

"You told me that you knew nothing of Willie!" she cried. "You have lied, for you murdered him!"

Before any one could interfere, she had plunged her knife into Delisle's throat, above the collar-bone. It was the stroke of death! He staggered, clutched at the air for support, and fell groveling in the dust, the death-rattle in his throat. Madge looked a moment on the senseless clay, and stooping, dipped her hand in his flowing blood and held it up.

"Ha! ha! ha!" she screamed. "He mocked at Wild Madge, and see how he is answered! Stand back, brothers of the Black League. The Ottawas are here!"

She was right, for from every side the red warriors were coming upon them, with weapons ready. Pontiac was foremost; he parted the crowd about the body, and started back in surprise as he beheld it.

"He is dead," he said. "Who has laid Red Lightning low?"

"I!" cried Madge. "I, the avenger of blood!"

"And she shall die for it!" cried Etienne Barbier, coming forward.

"Silence, blot upon the holy name of priest," said a stern voice, and Father Marteau, the Jesuit priest of the Ottawas, stood before him. "Go; you are ordered to return to Paris, there to report to the Head how you have done your work. I, as your superior, order it!"

"Brother Josephus" folded his hands meekly on his breast and bowed his head.

"I obey," he said. "Must I go at once?"

"This moment."

The Jesuit again bowed and turned to make his way through the wilderness to Quebec. No one in America ever saw his face again, after he sailed for Paris. What his fate was, no one will ever know, but he was blotted entirely from the book of life.

The Circle of Vengeance was broken by the death of their leader, and scattered to the four winds. None of them ever returned to Detroit, for their secrets were now known, and the place in which they had held their meetings was found, with all its paraphernalia.

They had banded together under Delisle's charge to drive the English out of Detroit, and had stirred up the Indians to the bloody work. Had the Canadians joined with them, they

must have succeeded, and the last of the chain of forts upon the lakes have fallen. When all was over, they found a hidden passage from Barlow's house under the wall of the fort to the river bank—a passage which had been built by the French long before the English occupancy, and through which Edward was carried upon the night of his capture. Why this passage had not been used in assailing the fort, no man can say. Probably Deltile meant to show the Indians their incompetency, and afterward gain credit with them by taking the fort by surprise, with the aid of the Circle of Vengeance. Whatever his design, his death doubtless saved Detroit from a great calamity.

Pentive had been called by Madge Sinclair to come to the rescue of Rose St. Aubin, and had redeemed his promise nobly. Madge had guided them, and arrived in time to avenge her slaughtered husband and save Rose from a fate worse than death.

Rose was returned to her father's house, who greeted her with joy. Edward Gresham and Ketadin were kept prisoners by the Indians, but with such men it was not a hard task to escape, and in less than a week they came, one dark night, to the water-gate of the fort in a canoe. They remained in the fort through the long siege, fighting gallantly, and making almost nightly excursions into the Indian camps, until the schooner which brought reinforcements to Detroit rounded the island, bearing the red cross of St. George gallantly at her peak, and Detroit was saved.

Madge Sinclair lived for years, but she no longer roamed the woods, and one day, when they missed her, they found her lying upon her husband's grave, dead, with a smile upon her face.

When peace came, Edward Gresham and Rose were made engaged, and Howard took into his house the beautiful Indian girl, Katherina, named in the honor of Davy Hedges.

The day, under the banner of the Trailer and Ketadin, he came in thus a mighty hunter, and one of the best scouts upon the border.

Edward Gresham grew to be the leading man in Detroit,

and from him is descended one of the best families of the great State he helped to build.

As for Pontiac, he belongs to history. But, though an Indian, and one who fought according to his lights, he was a wonderful man, whose name will not soon pass into oblivion.

THE END.

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